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GIANTS OF THE PULPIT

REV. EVAN PRICE

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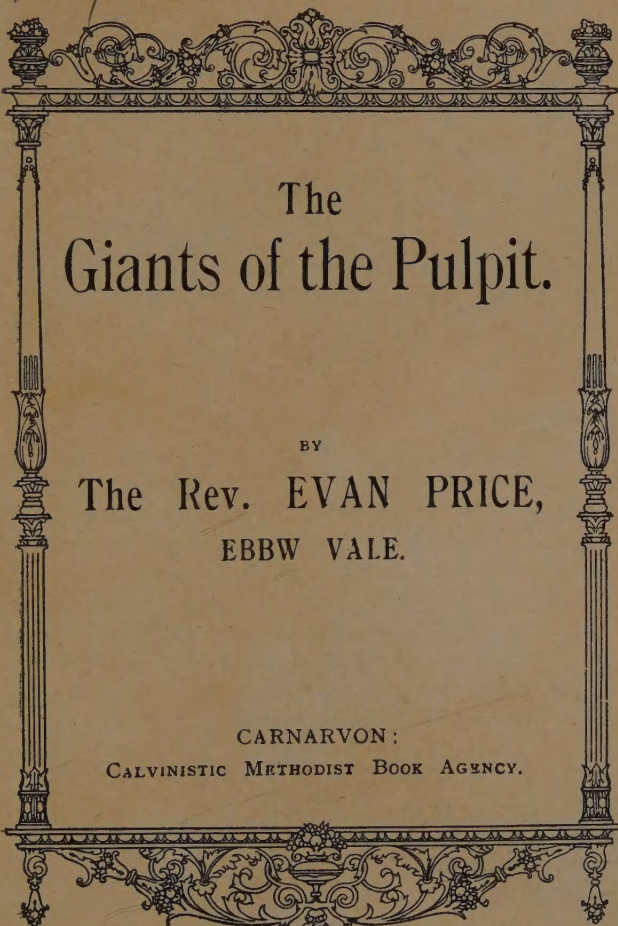
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The Giants of the Pulpit.

BY

The Rev. EVAN PRICE,
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FOREWORD.

THIS volume is one of a Series of short popular studies of various aspects of the work and history of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church. The first of the series has been published already under the title "A Bird's-eye view of our Foreign Fields." It was composed by Mrs. S. M. Saunders ("S. M. S."), a lady whose name is a household word in Wales, and who combines with a keen missionary enthusiasm the sure touch of a literary artist.

The present volume is the second of the Series, and was composed by the late Rev. Evan Price, Ebbw Vale, at the request of the Literature Committee of the General Assembly. The Committee's intention was to have the Series uniform as regard size. But when Mr. Price's MS. was sent in it was found to be considerably larger than what was expected. At the Committee's suggestion, Mr. Price readily undertook to condense the work somewhat so as to bring it nearer the prescribed limits. Unfortunately, however, before the author was able to carry out his intention death intervened, and he was called suddenly to leave this life and all its tasks for a higher sphere of labour.

At the request of the General Assembly Mr. Abraham Morris, F.R.H.S., undertook in co-operation with the Rev. John Owen, M.A., Carnarvon, to prepare the work for publication. But these friends felt that they could not take it upon themselves to carry out the author's unrealised intention of condensing the work. It is published, therefore, practically as it was presented to the Committee by the author.

THE GIANTS OF THE PULPIT.

We desire to offer our warm thanks to Mr. Morris and Mr. Owen for preparing the work for the Press. But it should be understood that they are in no way responsible for the style or the subject-matter.

This volume was our friend's last contribution to our literature. On every page it bears the impress of his striking and original personality. A great admirer of the Eminent Preachers of Wales, he had partaken in no inconsiderable measure of their remarkable gifts. He was a man of large sympathy, of a vivid and creative imagination, of flowing eloquence and of glowing enthusiasm, and he had a clear and high conception of the purpose and the message of the Ministry of the Gospel.

While we lament the fact that we shall not again see of the fruits of our dear brother's literary labours, we feel it a sweet though a sad privilege to present to the reader this, his last tribute to the "Giants of the Pulpit."

THE SECRETARY OF THE LITERATURE COMMITTEE.

July 17, 1924.

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The Giants of the Pulpit.

I.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is now easy to admit that the Pulpit in Wales has been the greatest power behind all its progress in knowledge and civilization. Once upon a time castles and monasteries frowned on our hills and nestled in the valleys, the first a symbol of alien tyranny and oppression, and the second of religion, in the absence of wholesome preaching, deteriorating into gross superstitions, and becoming the haunts of many unclean things. But there came a happy change over the scene, and our hills and valleys are now covered with many sanctuaries, which attract the crowds, who come together to hear the Word of God, and to worship in the beauty of holiness. These thousands of shrines, great and small, distributed all over the country, are manifestations of life, and the wealthiest thing in the universe is life. It was otherwise a few centuries ago, when the land was enveloped in darkness and desolation, and—

“The Sabbath in its dismal sound
An elegy of Christ.”

But there were heroes in the land in those dark ages, who through faith became heralds of the dawn of a better day. A live coal from the altar touched the lips of the old preachers, and they moved on the mountains, kindling their torches like flaming seraphs, amid the encircling gloom. It was the mighty power of the pulpit in the heathen darkness of the early 18th

century, that originated our Connexion, and it is preaching with might and unction generation to generation, that has preserved its vigour with the power of endless life. The Fathers went forth in the Name and authority of Christ, strongly convinced that they belonged to the holy Catholic Church that was born on the Day of Pentecost, when Peter and the Apostles preached the unsearchable riches of Christ. The Founders of our Connexion were never perplexed very much by either human traditions or organizations, but their hearts were fired with a passion to enlighten their fellow-countrymen, and to win them to Christ. They were convinced that the Divine plan of accomplishing this great work was preaching the Gospel, and they accordingly gave the pulpit a position of supremacy. And this is the great link which connects us to-day with the heroes of the Apostolic age.

When and by whom Christianity was first of all introduced into Wales are questions that have never been satisfactorily answered. All that can be certainly known is that Christianity had reached these hills in the 2nd century, and that the Ancient Church of Wales differed from that of Rome by emphasizing *preaching* more than ritualistic observances. It is probable that some truth is enshrined in the traditions of St. David's preaching, and his successful advocacy of orthodoxy at the "Synod of Llanddewi Brefi."

But the old Church of Wales sadly deteriorated, so that Rome claimed her allegiance in the 8th century, and with the Norman Conquest completed her work of subjugation. Ultimately the dreamy, imaginative Welshman, naturally fond of colour and ritual of music and mysticism, became the most zealous and stubborn of all the inhabitants of this island in his attachment to Roman Catholicism.

From the 12th century to the Protestant Reformation is known as "the dark ages." The "Book of the Anchorite" is a fair specimen of the Monkish preaching of those deplorable times. It is a sorry combination of childish superstitions and blasphemous audacity, supposed to be a translation of an Epistle written by Melito, Bishop of Sardis, to the Church at Laodicea. It was the Text Book of all the Roman priests of Wales at that

time, and became the subject matter of their homilies to the farmers and peasantry of Llangeitho and Tregaron, long before they heard

“ That sound from o’er the hills of Dewi
Like a burning flaming sheen,
Resounding through the rocks of Towy,
And the shrine of Ystrad Ffin.”

This rubbish from the “ Book of the Anchorite ” was also the repast which the men of Gwent feasted upon when the Monks of Tintern Abbey and Llanthony preached during the holy seasons of the Church, before the advent of Trevecca’s mighty trumpet:—

“ Which proclaimed the Gospel’s treasures
In a fervent holy strain,
From the Severn’s silent regions
To the lower Western main.”

But we must not ignore “ Shôn Cent ” (1323—1420), who was a Puritan long before the name had yet been coined. He deplored the luxurious practices of the Monkish orders, who had so greatly degenerated from the early days of their solemn vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Although he remained in the Church of Rome, with its Mass, purgatory, and Mariolatry, he was a pioneer of the Reformation, and coming events are obviously casting their shadows before them in many of his descriptive poems in the “ cywydd ” metre.

But the “ Morning Star ” was Walter Brute (or the Briton), who was the first to preach the Gospel in its purity, and became Wickliffe’s principal helper. He was of gentle birth, and a graduate of Oxford, but his career closed after his trial for heresy before the Bishop of Hereford in 1393, when he was liberated. His subsequent history has never been disclosed. Some of his descendants to-day are church officers in our Connexion on the borders of Brecknock and Monmouth and worthy of their noble lineage.

Another century elapsed when John Penry, of Cefnbrith, Llangammarch, appears on the scene. He was brought up a

zealous Romanist, but was converted at Cambridge, and was consumed with a passion for evangelizing his countrymen. Having written a hundred tracts, and presented petitions to Queen Elizabeth and Parliament for help in his plan of initiating an order of lay preachers for Wales, he was cruelly put to death in 1593, at St. Thomas-a-Watering, in London. The pilgrim martyr was executed in the "merry month of May," but time has re-instated Penry on a lofty pedestal, which is to-day decorated with the blossoms of another May, by the most illustrious in the land. The Prime Minister* some time ago visited the ancestral home of Penry on the slopes of the Eppynt hills, uncovering his head with great reverence, as he passed through the porch of the old farm-house, where the stalwart Kilsby used to hear the rustling of the wings of the guardian angel of Welsh Nonconformity. Every Free Church pulpit in our country is a monument of Penry's zeal for regenerating his native land. The late Sir O. M. Edwards sums up his life as follows:—"Penry saw clearly how his mother-country was to be born again through Welsh preaching. It was his love for Wales that compelled him to condemn the priests and prelates who were dumb and indifferent. It all came about in God's good time. 'Treveca' is one side of Cefnbrith, and 'Pantycelyn' on the other side. The former was the home of Wales's greatest lay preacher—Howel Harris, and the latter of its greatest Hymnist—William Williams, the sweet singer of Wales, and we can now afford to forgive Whitgift, the Archbishop, once his fellow-student, who was the first to sign Penry's death warrant. He earnestly thought he was serving God and his Queen by crushing Nonconformity. But let it be counted as righteousness to him, that he encouraged Dr. Morgan to translate the Scriptures into Welsh."

The condition of Wales remained dark and dreary for many years, and 50 years after Penry's death, Vicar Pritchard, Llandovery, who remained through life a devoted Churchman, describes in colours as lurid as the pilgrim martyr himself the scandalous neglect of the clergy.

* The Rt. Hon. D. Lloyd George.

It appears the saintly old vicar was himself a powerful preacher, hence the following stanza, delivered by a peasant bard of the day, indicating the effects of one of his sermons at St. David's:—

“ The Vicar of Llandoverly
Stands highest of the mighty,
St. David's heard his trumpet call,
Awaken all the country.”

His collection of homely poems—“ The Welshman's Candle ”—is well known, but it is gratifying to know that his pulpit was a power for righteousness in an age notorious for its iniquity and unbelief.

There is no space to describe the various Nonconformist Fathers, with occasional Bishops like Drs. Humphreys and Richard Davies. I have no desire to omit the services of good Churchmen who used the Press, such as Sir John Price, Edmund Prys, William Salesbury, T. Huit, Dr Davies, Mallwyd, Morris Kyffin, and Charles Edwards, down to Ellis Wyn and Theophilus Evans. Tradition is however very silent about their preaching powers, so that they scarcely come within our present survey.

But the first Nonconformists were powerful preachers—William Wroth, William Erbury, Walter Cradoc, Vavasor Powell, John Myles, Stephen Hughes, Samuel Jones, Brynllwarch, and Rhys Prytherch, in the South; also Hugh Owen, Bron-y-clydwr, James Owen, Oswestry, Morgan Llwyd, John ap John, the Quaker, and others in the North. “ And these all having obtained a good report through faith,” passed away, having seen visions and dreamed dreams, convinced that a realization of their projects was not far away, and a great awakening at hand.

It is not easy to condense the Christianity of 18 centuries into a chapter, but to ignore all the previous efforts of other pulpit giants before the Methodist Revival would be glaringly unjust, and especially so at the present juncture, when a yearning for co-operation in the “ unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace ” seems to be struggling for expression in the minds of all Christian Communions.

II.

THE GREAT AWAKENING.

ALTHOUGH the afore-mentioned heroes were pioneers preparing the way for greater things, the country was in a lamentable condition at the beginning of the 18th century. The Nonconformist congregations had lost the ardour of their first love, and it was notorious that the Parish Churches were generally deserted. But the darkest hour is frequently that nearest the dawn. God moved in a mysterious way, and Griffith Jones (1684—1761), Rector of Llanddowror, became the "Morning Star of the Methodist Revival." His parents were Independents, but he cast his lot in the old Mother Church, and attracted attention as a fervent preacher when Curate of Langharne. He was presented to the Benefice of Llanddowror by his brother-in-law, Sir John Phillips, a man of noble lineage and good character. The new rector became popular as a preacher far beyond the bounds of his own parish. He was strictly evangelical, and his heart full to overflowing with a holy zeal for regenerating his benighted countrymen. The parish church became too small, so that he usually preached in the adjoining graveyards:—

"Thousands come and fill the churches,
Where their weary souls rejoice,
And the grave-yards throng with hearers
Thrilled with his majestic voice."

His name and fame extended over the whole country, even as far as Scotland, and he frequently visited the Metropolis, and officiated once at least before the Court of Queen Anne. He was too strong a Churchman to fraternize much with the older Nonconformists, although it was they that had rocked his cradle. At the close of his life he associated freely with the Methodists, but probably regarded them as a society within

the Church, and not as yet a separate organization. Hence the comment of "Pantycelyn":

"Alas, because the morn was gloomy,
And his faith exceeding small,
He was terrified to travel
Far beyond the church's wall."

But any mention of the "giants" of the pulpit would be inadequate without a reference to Griffith Jones, who also by his "Charity Schools" became one of Wales's greatest benefactors. His mantle in this capacity fell on "Charles of Bala," who, if not a giant of the pulpit, had a genius for organization, and was a writer of much versatility. His brother, the renowned "Charles of Carmarthen," although not a popular preacher, was the greatest Divine of his day (1762—1834).

We now come to DANIEL ROWLANDS (1713—1790), the most powerful preacher of the "Great Awakening," and according to the Biographer of the Countess of Huntingdon, the greatest in Europe, if not the most illustrious since the Apostolic age. He was converted under the preaching of Griffith Jones, and although in "Orders" was on his own admission, proud and frivolous, a leader in all games and sports, and a nimble dancer on the village green, oftentimes on Sunday afternoons. He experienced a remarkable change, and for many subsequent months a strange power swept over the darkest recesses of his inmost soul. His penitence was deep and thorough, and he began preaching the Law from Sinai's summit with overwhelming power. He continued a veritable Boanerges for some years, but ultimately became also a "son of consolation."

His persecutors at one time called Rowlands "the cracked cleric," but to use the words of a great admirer, it was through those cracks that his benighted countrymen saw the awe-inspiring glory of eternity. Would to God that many more of us were cracked in the same way.

The Monthly Communion Services became the great rallying centre of the Methodist converts of the Principality. Even the great Whitfield himself was appalled with wonder at the

scenes which he saw at Llangeitho. "I have seen" (said he) "at 7 in the morning, some 10,000 people breaking forth into the most ecstatic strains in the middle of a sermon, shouting 'glory' and 'halelujah,' and jumping with a lively joy, under the Divine power, until our hearts burned within us, and especially so, when Mr. Rowlands approached the Lord's Table, and administered the Sacrament." If that be the clear testimony of an Anglo-Saxon, it is not strange that the mercurial Welsh, so imaginative and impulsive, strongly believed that the angelic hosts, from round about the starry throne, sometimes descended to chime in with the revivalists in their hymns of loudest praise. There is a long-cherished tradition that Handel conceived the lofty strains of his Halelujah Chorus in all their towering sublimity, amid the outbursts of praise at Llangeitho in one of the old preaching Associations, when that Prince of Musicians was on a visit to one of the noble families of the county. It is well known that he was extremely friendly with the Countess of Huntingdon. He sent for that "elect lady" when on his deathbed, and it was one of her chaplains that administered spiritual consolation to him when treading the verge of Jordan. The Rev. D. Worthington, Rector of Llangeitho accepts the old tradition in his Biography of Rowlands, adding a most interesting item of information, that it was the great reformer himself who preached upon the occasion from Revelation xix. 16. However much historians may differ about the truth of the above tradition, it is certain that a striking resemblance exists between their strains of jubilation at Llangeitho, in the period of their great rejoicings, and the enchantic music of the Halelujah Chorus.

Daniel Rowlands devoted his whole life to preaching. He published a few things, and amongst them a number of sermons, but he was not a writer so much as a born preacher, fashioned for his high and holy calling by the choicest gifts of nature and grace. All the qualities of a great orator were reflected in his fine open countenance. His mouth was large and wide. The cadencies of his voice were golden keys, which opened every lock in the mysterious chambers of the thousands of souls grouped around him in his most impassioned moments. His

sentences were not involved, but short and epigrammatic. He started slowly, but soon acquired fluency and ease, subduing every will by the tremendous earnestness of his rich voice, quivering with emotion, and brimful of conviction. His discourses were massive as well as beautiful. There was the pillar as well as the lily work on the top. It has been observed of Whitfield that when intensified with emotion, his discourses suffered, and became feebler, hence the legend of his highly sonorous expressions—like “the blessed word Mesopotamia.” But Rowlands invariably soared into the loftiest heights of oratory, through the inherent power of massive thought, which illuminated the intellect, when stirring the emotions, with the greatest enthusiasm.

Howell Harris, who had heard all the greatest revivalists of England, used to say that Rowlands eclipsed them all in power and pathos. Charles of Bala, always cautious, and eminently sane, wrote of Rowlands, that “he was the finest combination of profundity of thought, and of a voice magnificent in range, strength and sweetness. He adds that in power and authority he was unequalled by any of his contemporaries. Some striking ideas appear in his published discourses, but it is impossible to imprison in cold print the impetuous oratory of this Prince of Preachers. The following gives a faint idea of his originality:—“It is not by following the process of human reasoning only that we find Christ. Reason is a fine faculty of the soul, of lofty lineage, a prince of the blood royal, but like Mephiboseth of old, also lame of limb. That prince could never approach King David himself unaided, so that his Majesty the King very graciously comes to him. So it is with human wisdom merely, it desires to die the death of the righteous, it discovers goodness, and eulogizes it, but never follows it until guided and aided by the power of Divine Grace—in Christ who said—‘I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.’”

He shouted with sweetest melody some of his best observations, which were never reduced to writing, although a few of them still survive in tradition: “O Heaven, Heaven, thy corners would be very vacant were it not that Zion is always

employed in rearing children for thee in this world of trial and tribulation." The following is another of his pithy sayings: "Oh! Tongue be silent and let the Foot speak."

He passed away October 16, 1790, aged 77 years, having preached for 53 years. His last words were that he was a sinner, poor and needy, but relying entirely on the merits of Christ's Atonement. "Pantycelyn" wrote his finest Elegy in memory of Daniel Rowlands. Although the eloquence has been frozen on his lips for many generations, the admiration for him as the finest preacher of "the great awakening" is still preserved un-impaired.

HOWEL HARRIS (1714—1773) is described as "the Luther of Wales," and occupies a position of influence almost equal to that of Rowlands, although he was never in "Orders," and had nothing to commend him but his sterling character, extraordinary gifts, and infinite capacity for hard work. His manifold activities for more than 20 years revolutionized the Principality, for he was not only a powerful preacher, sweeping all before him like a mighty rushing wind, but also a genius in matters of organization, planning with tireless energy gigantic schemes of far-reaching consequences. His compelling personality has impressed itself deeper on the polity of our Connexion than that of any one else of the Methodist Fathers. The Weekly Society Meetings, the Monthly Meetings of the Presbyteries, and the Quarterly Associations are the products of his creative mind. There was no limit to his labours either in the sphere of thought or action. His profound meditations on the Person of Christ, so full of enraptured enthusiasm, and of mystic power, reveal in him the possibilities of a great theologian. It may be they were never developed to their utmost capacity, and we are not unmindful of the charge of heresy brought against him, which nearly rent the Denomination in twain. However "all's well that ends well," for he was fully reconciled to his brethren, and attended their Associations during the latter years of his life, as in the days of yore. He was the strangest and most terrible of all combinations—the mystic and man of action. His skill in developing the natural resources and industries of the country was shown in his provision for the "Trevecca Family"

and the establishment of the Breconshire Agricultural Society. He also became a military officer for a period, raising at his own expense a troop of Militia men, which he drilled, and led to various sea-port towns by instructions as a precautionary measure in case of a foreign invasion. But he was above all things a magnificent preacher. He stood at the head of the Exhorters, and was their General Superintendent. He is known in history as the most illustrious of all the Lay Preachers of the Principality.

He seldom fixed on any particular text, but denounced the evils of the day with a power that was terrible in its immediate effects. Impurity, intemperance, lasciviousness, blasphemy, and frivolity came under his fierce condemnation. It was he who first of all initiated a holy crusade against the dissipations of the carnivals and pleasure fairs of that iniquitous age. He frequently preached two and three times a day for years, all over Wales, in the dwellings of the people and the open air, incurring the wrath of the squirearchy and parochial clergy, together with the ragged regiments of publicans, harpists, dancers, fiddlers, and all who were given over to the depravity of that licentious age. Lewis Morris, a leader of the Welsh literary movement of the day, but with a strain of lasciviousness in many of his writings, denounces very scornfully the Reformer's preaching. Theophilus Evans, Vicar of Llangammarch, and a Welsh writer of note, tried to shout him down, when he addressed a large concourse of people in his parish. The old cleric, a lover of his country in his own way, dropped into his lonely grave without realizing in the least degree that "Tre-vecca's mighty trumpet" was a voice from God. Howell Harris had many thousands of converts all over Wales, amongst whom was Williams of Pantycelyn, who loved to adore him as his spiritual father.

He fell asleep when only 59 years old, but he had lived to see benighted Wales well on the way to become an enlightened Wales, truly consecrated by a marvellous transformation.

HOWELL DAVIES (1717—1770) was described as the Apostle of Pembrokeshire, although really a native of Monmouthshire. He stood high in the estimation of his co-workers, and multi-

tudes thronged to hear him. He excelled in tenderness, and left the cause in that county in a flourishing condition with 3,000 communicants.

But the next in pulpit power to Rowlands and Harris was PETER WILLIAMS (1722—1797). William Williams "Pantycelyn" occupied the chief position as Poet and Hymnist, but tradition is rather silent about his pulpit gifts. Peter Williams on the other hand, stood very near the foremost two as preacher, and was far beyond them both as author and commentator. He was the finest combination of preacher and man of letters of any of the Fathers. He was exceptionally prominent as a preacher, lifting his voice throughout the whole country with great boldness and heroism. His life-story reads like a stirring romance, invested with a spiritual power that is truly sublime. He was the first of the Methodist Fathers to preach in Anglesea, and was blinded for some time by the mud thrown in his face by ruffians who came to scoff. Sir Watkin Williams Wynne cast him into his fox-hounds kennel. He was befriended at Bala by a sturdy Scotchman, under a shower of stones, who eulogized his preaching, and said he was by far the best preacher he had ever heard outside of Scotland! Peter Williams was both intellectual and fervent in his ministry. Having cultivated his mind with diligence he depended less on the "hwyl" than most of his brethren. It is related that Williams of Pantycelyn once addressed him good humouredly and said: "I can do nothing unless the Holy Spirit be invariably present at my elbow, but as for you, Peter, if the Spirit went for a trip to France, I rather think you could manage it very well!" The point of the story is that Peter Williams was always well prepared, and never trusted anybody, not even the Holy Spirit, unless he had toiled in his study to secure a message for the people.

When we remember him as the Father of Biblical exposition in Wales, and Father of our Periodical Literature, it should never be forgotten that he came also very near the two foremost giants of our pulpit in the 18th century. And there are more of his lineal descendants to-day in the pulpit, and moving in the highest intellectual circles of our nation than of any others of the giants of "the great awakening."

III.

TO THE FIRST ORDINATION.

THE REV. DAVID JONES, RECTOR OF LLANGAN (1735—1810) stood in the forefront of the second generation of pulpit giants, associating a great deal with the earliest Fathers. He was born at Llanllieni, Carmarthenshire, in the first year of the Revival. He was converted when reading the works of Flavel, and although in Holy Orders, he testifies that he was a stranger to the saving grace of God's evangel until he began reading the above divine. He was preferred to the benefice of Llangan when a curate in Wiltshire, through the influence of Lady Huntingdon, in 1768. He soon became prominent as a distinguished preacher, with great power of persuasion. Although he denounced iniquity in scathing terms, he possessed the wooing note to a greater degree than any of his contemporaries. His personal appearance was most impressive, and the fine open countenance a benediction in itself. Llangan became a second Llangeitho, attracting the crowds from all parts of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire. The Monthly Communion Meetings were an outstanding feature, when the Parish Church was filled to overflowing, and sermons were delivered in the churchyard, the rectory barn, or from a stage erected in an adjoining field. His principal assistant was Edward Coslett, of Castleton, Monmouthshire, a village blacksmith, but a great enthusiast, with a strain of homely genius. When he applied to a Bench of Magistrates for a license to preach, the Chairman replied with a sneer, "You, Ned, after shoeing the horses, going to preach! God help you." "Thank you kindly, sir," was the prompt reply, "His help, and your good will, will do the job alright."

"Where do you get those red-hot sermons from, Ned?" asked the genial Rector once. "From a place you have never been to yet, Mr. Jones, from between the fire and the anvil, sir," said he.

Those were the days of heaven on earth at Llangan, and throughout the whole of Gwent and Glamorgan. A local versifier sang:—

“ From Llangana came the music,
Like a trumpet’s mighty sound,
And the crowds with mystic power
Were lifted heavenward with a bound.”

The seraph-preacher was not a hermit confined to his rural retreat at Llangan. He made frontal attacks upon the strongholds of evil all over the Vale of Glamorgan. There was a fair held annually on August 25th at St. Mary’s Hill, which became the happy hunting ground of all the forces of evil for 20 miles around. He boldly invaded their quarters, denouncing sin, and preaching the Gospel in all its sweetest accents, with a fascination that was irresistible. His ministry destroyed the fair completely, and he regularly visited the spot for 30 years, holding religious services that were conspicuous in their manifestation of Divine power.

He also travelled widely in North Wales, and was the most popular of all the Fathers in the Metropolis and large towns of England, using his influence to secure contributions from the rich to build chapels and schoolrooms in Wales. The most notable of all these perhaps was Salem, Pencoed. The Sunday morning Society or Church Meeting, which he established here, was continued for 150 years. I remember it well in my student days, when the late Alderman W. Howells (brother of Dean Howells and brother-in-law of Dr. Saunders) led with grace and unction.

The Rector of Llangan was at one time persecuted because of his irregularities. “ You are preaching at unconsecrated places, Jones,” said the Bishop of Llandaff once. “ No, my lord,” was the swift reply, “ when Jesus Christ set His foot on this earth He consecrated every inch of its soil, and without that, my lord, no other consecration would be of much good.” The good bishop nodded his assent, and forgave the offence with a genial smile, both retiring arm in arm, to the great dismay of the antagonists who slyly looked on.

Like all the Fathers he had a powerful voice, and when attacking the crying evils of the day would use the declamatory style, but his favourite method was persuasion, not the mighty wind, like Daniel Rowlands, but the balmy breeze, laden with all the fragrance of God's own flower garden. Amongst the tuneful tribe of the evangelical Revival, he was the sweetest of all the harpists to tame the wayward natures of that evil generation. Williams Pantycelyn refers to the effects of his preaching in the well-known lines:—

“ He melts the stones with tender pathos,
And gently soothes our plaintive needs,
Lo! the stubborn oaks are pliant
Bending like the supple reeds.”

He passed away peacefully on August 12, 1810, at the home of his second wife in Pembrokeshire, where he lived for the last few years of his life. He had only just reached his home from an Association at Llangeitho, when he breathed his last, amidst a vision of angels, who filled the death chamber, and were “ God's liveried servants ” bringing home this honoured minister at the end of his great life-work, in the year before the first ordination.

ROBERT ROBERTS, CLYNNOG (1762—1802), belonged to the same period, and was the most brilliant of all his contemporaries. His personal appearance was not impressive, because he suffered severely from the ague when a young man, which developed into chronic rheumatism, which greatly disfigured what promised once to be a very comely presence. He possessed all the romantic nature and imaginative power of the little dark-eyed Iberian at his best, dedicated to God, and regenerated by His Holy Spirit. He was regarded as the nearest approach to Daniel Rowlands himself of all the preachers of the second generation of Methodists, occasionally soaring higher even than the Apostle of Llangeitho in his loftiest flights.

He also flourished before the first Ordination in 1811, so that technically he belonged to the “ Exhorters,” but the whole country with one accord acclaimed him as a giant, who stood in

the very front rank of preachers, matchless in his power, with no real rival, clerical or lay, in the whole country. He was converted at the age of 16 at Bryn'rodyn, under Jones, Llangan, during one of his many visits to North Wales. The young convert for a time became a farm-servant, but loved to attend the preaching of the day, far and near. He accompanied the pilgrims to Llangeitho on many occasions, and so marvellous was his retentive memory that he could literally reproduce the sermons. Rowlands, when he came to hear of it, summoned the young man to his presence, and requested him to repeat the last sermon he delivered that day, which young Robert did with great fluency, ease, and expression! "Well, well," replied the old Reformer, "I've seen a good many thieves taking their spoils away from here, from time to time, but I am bound to say that you, Robin, my boy, have beaten them every one, by taking away the biggest swag of all."

He began preaching when 25 years old, amid the heat of a great revival, and for the next 15 years, taking him all in all, he occupied the premier position amongst all the preachers of the Principality. His emotions were strong and deep, his creative genius startling in power and originality, and all this was accompanied with a dramatic power of the first order, which completely staggered his hearers. But the crown and glory of all was the Divine unction invariably bestowed on his preaching.

He was capable of a greater variety of style, in matter and delivery than any of his brethren. He would discuss the Being and Attributes of God, until all were overwhelmed with an awe-inspiring power, and then moved on in tones of sweetest melody to describe the love of Christ, and the inexhaustible riches of His salvation, until all were charmed and subdued. Sometimes the glory was so unutterably sublime that the preacher would pray devoutly,—“O! God, stay Thy hand, lest we be crushed by a splendour infinitely greater than the shining glory of a thousand suns.” He frequently alighted on a text, with a few dramatic touches. It was not any lengthy exposition, but with a swift intuition he comprehended its true meaning, and the subsequent developments would be invested with

a wealth of imagery and spiritual power, that were truly amazing. He could shout the top notes with all the power of his trumpet tones, as he proclaimed—"Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup" (Psalm iv. 6)—until his hearers, full of fear and trembling, visibly dropped before him, as if dead. And then with a sanctified skill in modulating his clarion voice, he changed from the terrors of sin and of law, to speak of abounding grace, as if he swept his fingers over the strings of a golden harp. A quotation from one of his elegies refers to this :—

"He in sweat, the crowds in tears,
Hark his voice a harp divine,
Sinai's thunders now are silenced,
We drink in joy of Heaven's best wine."

His epic power in describing Calvary's supreme conflict is still preserved in tradition, and the soul-stirring picture handed down from generation to generation :—"How does the conflict appear? Is the progress good, Satan?" said he with great earnestness and dramatic gesture. "It is a draw, and we came down together," replied Satan, the great antagonist. "Well, well," replied the preacher, "but how happy it is to know that the Captain of our salvation maintains His ground. He holds His own! Oh, Jesus, may Thy triumph hasten finally and completely, Thou strong, immortal Son of God," and then he again turned slightly aside, putting the question with great anxiety—"How does the battle wage?" "A draw" was the reply again, but now in querulous tones, that were hoarse with desolating fury. "Oh," was the preacher's comment, "our Saviour valiantly holds His own again, and obviously Satan is losing ground, for his voice is hoarse and trembling." He then proceeded in a most vivid and imaginative strain to describe the anxiety of patriarchs and prophets on the sunny heights of Heaven, about this far-reaching conflict. He hazards the question once more, but, lo and behold, there comes no reply. "What," said he, his voice quivering with emotion, "Is it possible that the two combatants are crushed

together in the tragic embrace of death? O blessed Jesus, shall I trouble Thee for one moment, to ask about the result of this mighty conflict?" And the words—"It is finished" ring triumphantly throughout the realms of heaven and earth. "Glory to God in the highest" shouted the preacher, "Robin's redemption is complete, and so is yours, men and women, complete in Christ." Let the music swell for ever, host upon host replying:—

" Salvation ! Let the echo fly
The spacious earth around,
While all the armies of the sky
Conspire to raise the sound."

He quaintly describes his feelings on another occasion, and goes on to say how he once infinitely preferred to be anything rather than a human being. "I'd rather be a raven, hovering over fields and forests, a carrion crow nestling on the craggy heights, or an ugly toad of the marshy swamps, yea, I remember the time when I'd rather be a helpless worm, in the muddy soil or sand, than be a member of humankind. I knew that when they had once passed away, they perished, but not so man. I felt that I had to face the endless ages of eternity, in the great Hereafter, and should experience the tortures of the Almighty's righteous anger in perdition for ever more. But that is not my conviction to-day. Oh, no, I have changed my tune and am looking forward with a radiant face, and an undying hope to a glorious Future, when I shall strike the loftiest notes of everlasting joy, rubbing shoulders with angels and archangels,

" Louder in my praise to Him
Than seraphim adoring."

"I now feel that I would not change places for anything with the finest angel in the realms of glory, for my human nature appears in the Person of my blessed Redeemer on the great white throne, with all the Principalities and Powers crowning Him Lord of all in loving adoration. Blessed be God for the privilege of being a member of the human race. 'Forasmuch

then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.' ”

It is no wonder that Jones of Edeyrn used to say: “ Oh, brethren, would we had all a hump on our backs, if we could only preach like Robin, puny little creature as he is ! ”

It is commonly supposed that Roberts, Clynnog, was the greatest product of the Welsh pulpit, in natural genius, from the very beginning. It was he who awakened the powers of Christmas Evans, who modelled his style upon him all through life.

His life-work only lasted for 15 years for he passed away at the early age of 40 years.

IV.

TWO GIANTS OF THE SUCCEEDING AGE.

EBENEZER MORRIS (1769—1825). He was the eldest son of David Morris, Twrgwyn, Cardiganshire, whom he succeeded in the oversight of the churches of that district. He resembled his father in his impressive personal appearance, inheriting also his intellectual gifts, which he so assiduously cultivated, until he far excelled the triumphs of his parent in the palmiest days. Jenkin Thomas, "Shenkyn Penhydd," the quaint old peasant-preacher of Glamorgan, used to tell him: "You came here, Eben, the first time, mounted high on your father's steed, but now you canter in high glee, safe and sound on your own steed, stronger and swifter than anything your good father ever trotted out. Take care you don't fall, my dear brother."

He soon reached the highest position in the South, because of his outstanding gifts and unflagging efforts. His temperament was more even, and his gifts of head and heart better balanced than those of any of the Fathers of the first period. He was brave and bold as a lion, and yet genial and kind, the finished product of both nature and grace. It is true that his sentences never blazed with the sparkling imagery of Roberts Clynnog's unapproachable genius, nor was he capable of his swift dramatic movements. Eben. Morris frequently confessed that "little Robin from the North was unrivalled as the seraph-preacher of his day," and positively refused to follow him at the Dolgelley Association, but quietly closed the service with a prayer. And yet Ebenezer Morris had his own magnificent gifts. The aptness of his remarks, the happiness of his phrasing, the full-orbed evangelical setting of his message, and the wide range and exquisite power of his voice, which reached the remotest fringe of a crowd of 20,000 people, combined to make him a power of the greatest magnitude. His magnetic

shout could be heard and clearly interpreted for miles away. He also, like the fathers of the previous generation, was prominently instrumental in putting down those revelries attached to fairs and other festivities, which periodically demoralized the people with so much riotous extravagance. One of his earliest triumphs was the abolition of a Vanity Fair on a moor near Pontrhydfendigaid in 1802, which was converted into a great Preaching Festival. This devoted servant of the Lord preached for many years, two and three times daily, officiating at all sorts of places, cottages, farmhouses, barns, fields and highways and sometimes in the ancestral homes of the rich, at such mansions as "Bronwydd," and "Llwyngwair." Occasionally he would preach on board a ship, when invited by a captain to give his blessing in that way, as a good send-off to the vessel on a new voyage. He towered above all his fellows at the South Wales Association, and also frequently attended the great meetings of North Wales, preaching with great regularity at the great Assemblies. There were no trains or motors in those far-off days, only the preacher's pony, and the poor animal often-times lame and out of sorts, with the fatigue of long journeys. He was over 40 at the time of the first Ordination, but took a prominent part in the movement. The "Fathers" in Episcopal orders, and more especially the beneficed clergymen, like Jones, Llangan, and Griffiths, Nevern, were strongly opposed to the innovation, because apart from their vested interests, they fore-saw it led to a complete separation from the Mother Church. But Ebenezer Morris and John Elias were sufficiently powerful to sweep away all opposition, and both were ordained—the former at Llandilo, August, 1811, and the latter at Bala, June, 1811, the great "Charles of Bala," himself a clergyman, taking a prominent part on both occasions. But for the greater portion of his life Ebenezer Morris was devoid of any "Orders," but none of the clergy would preach after him at any of the Association Meetings. When the Rev. John Williams, Lledrod, a much esteemed clergyman, was urged to follow Ebenezer Morris at Fishguard, the good-natured cleric promptly replied: "No! Not if you gave me the whole of Fishguard, and the rest of Pembrokeshire, thrown into the

bargain." His chosen subjects to preach upon were the Person of Christ and His mediatorial offices. He had thoroughly digested the old Puritan theology, and the Rev. D. Griffiths, Vicar of Nevern, used to say that he knew not of anyone who could master a new book so quickly and thoroughly as Ebenezer Morris.

The Rev. W. Hughes, rector of Caerwys, but a native of South Wales, said that he had heard him on many occasions, and "that he had the boldness of Luther, the keenness of Calvin, and the intensity of Knox." That was probably the pardonable exaggeration of an ardent admirer, but still an indication of Ebenezer Morris's great power and position in the country. The Rev. David Jones, Treborth, has left a word-picture of him as he appeared at the Bala Association when he preached on the Atonement. He goes on to say how the great preacher's power gradually increased in volume, like the swellings of the incoming tide. The flood of holy emotion which covered the Green of Bala was irresistible in its universal sway. He would shout in his native Welsh the great word "Iawn"—propitiation for sin,—a word which, as the poet says, fills—

"Not one field only, but all the realms of earth as well,
Nor can the ages of eternity its fullest story tell."

The patriarch-preacher of Tonyrefail—William Evans—who died some 30 years ago, almost a centenarian, used to say that the cadencies of Ebenezer Morris's voice were richer and fuller than those of any of his contemporaries, and he would add: "Anybody who has never heard Ebenezer Morris has but an inadequate conception of the marvellous flexibility and power of the human voice at its best."

This prince of preachers passed away at the age of 56 years, in 1825, at the height of his power and popularity.

JOHN ELIAS (1774—1841). We are now in the presence of Wales's most illustrious orator of all times. A distinction is sometimes made between the gifts required for the pulpit and the platform, with an implication that one may shine in one capacity, while an absolute failure in the other. Tradition as-

serts that John Elias stood first and foremost both on the platform and in the pulpit. None of his brother-ministers ever approached him in the thrilling efforts of his platform oratory when advocating the claims of the Bible Society, or denouncing the evils of Intemperance and Impurity. It is reported that the then Marquis of Anglesea was his chairman on one occasion at a Bible Society Meeting. The Marquis had distinguished himself at the Battle of Waterloo, losing a limb in the action. The great orator used the incident with consummate skill to show the mysterious workings of God's Providence, preserving the brave nobleman's life, so that he might be again a mighty figure in another and a happier field of service, at the head of great missionary and humanitarian enterprizes, not for destruction, but for construction, inasmuch as peace had her triumphs also, and not less renowned than those of war. His adroitness and genuine fervour on such occasions produced overwhelming effects. Mr. Henry Richards, M.P., the Apostle of Peace, testified that he had heard in that and other capacities the greatest orators of Europe, but never one in any country who rivalled John Elias at his best, in either power, pathos or dramatic action.

His voice was not equal to that of Ebenezer Morris in quality and compass, but was penetrating, and under perfect control.

He acquired great power and prominence early in his career, and scarcely ever afterwards surpassed his early triumphs in sheer dramatic force, but naturally added much to his culture and stores of knowledge. The orator's special instincts developed rapidly in his case to their full stature. Indeed, it has been suggested that there were manifestations of power in his early preaching when plain "John Elias," that were occasionally absent when he became everybody's idol as "Mr. Elias," and adored by peers and peasants alike, entertained in the palaces of the rich, as a gentleman preacher, and united in his second marriage with a titled society lady.

When David Cadwaladr, a quaint and candid old preacher, heard him for the first time, he exclaimed with uplifted hands: "May the Lord preserve him from error, because he compels everybody to believe every word he says." It was a great

tribute to his earnestness and authority when only a very young preacher.

He removed from Carnarvonshire to Anglesea after his first marriage in 1799, and resided at Llanfechell. His name became ever afterwards associated with the old island of the Druids. One of the greatest sins of "Mona" in those days was the desecration of the Lord's Day. They never hesitated to grind the corn on Sundays when the wind was favourable, and frequently the windmills could be seen whirling around, and scaring the birds in fields and forests, and otherwise spoiling the peace of God's people on the holy Sabbath day. But these obnoxious practices were promptly put down by this great preacher of righteousness. Nor did he confine his power in this matter to Anglesea. He achieved a similar triumph at Rhuddlan in 1802, when he restroyed the Harvest Fair, always held on a Sunday, and the prolific source of all manner of sins and uncleanness. He made a bold frontal attack on the centre of all the revelry, and began preaching amid the sounds of the harps and fiddles, the dancing and ribald songs of the ragged regiments of this ungodly crowd. His opening prayer, offered with awe-inspiring solemnity, made a deep impression, as he proceeded to express gratitude that the earth had not been opened to swallow these callous crowds, who transgressed so wilfully the holy law of a just and yet merciful God. His voice was choked with emotion, as he pleaded for pardon and the power to regenerate a wayward and stiff-necked generation. He then commenced his sermon, and emphasized the holiness of the Lord's Day, hurling his thunderbolts with all the terrors of outraged law. The bombardment was so complete that the doers of iniquity became paralyzed with fear and trembling. He reached his soul-stirring climax as he described how the robbers took away the pearl of days, when the angels of heaven could be heard rustling their wings, waiting for an opportunity to distribute the unsearchable riches of Christ to the poor and needy, all over the land. He concluded by announcing in trumpet tones, how the vengeance of God would justly fall in all its terrors on any person attempting to restore this iniquitous fair at any future time. He achieved his purpose, and this fair at Rhuddlan was heard of no more.

He first of all visited South Wales at the invitation of Ebenezer Morris, and his preaching was accompanied by such mighty deeds as had not been experienced in that province since the days of Rowlands and Harris.

He was called to the Metropolis in 1806, and for 10 weeks preached every evening, and three times on Sunday. His total number of texts was 70. He terrified even the old "Cymreigyddion Society," which was given over largely to the festivities of eating and drinking, wine and revelry largely predominating, for their key-note is still preserved in the Invitation song written by Lewis Morris:—

"Come all ye creeds and classes,
Fill to the brim your glasses,
And crowd with fun the spacious hall,
While crushing all distresses."

John Elias completely sobered these lively fraternities, taming the impetuous Celtic nature of the Bohemian spirits present on the festive occasions.

We next find him in Liverpool, where he preached four times on Sundays, commencing at 7 in the morning. He also conducted a meeting at one o'clock on weekdays for the dockers, clerks, and business men in general.

It is recorded how at one period he preached on 95 occasions in seven weeks, travelling 700 miles. He surpassed everybody in the magnitude of his work since the days of Howell Harris, the great Apostle of Trevecca. He was always present at every Association in North Wales, and after the death of "Charles of Bala" became the acknowledged leader and Bishop of all the Bishops. Apart from his preaching, his stirring addresses on special occasions became a feature of all the Assemblies, because of his marvellous platform powers.

In 1824, at the Holyhead Association he made an impassioned onslaught on the sin of Intemperance, between two sermons delivered by other ministers. It was complained that even the Associations were made the occasions of drinking and dissipation. Having described the offence and explained the circumstances, he puts the culprits up for sale, and acts the auctioneer:

"Who will have them?" said he. "Will you, Church of England people, have them?" "No, certainly not! We have pledged ourselves at the solemn rite of Confirmation by the Bishop to renounce the devil and all his works."

"Independents! Will you take them?" "What! We, who have forsaken the Old Mother Church because of its corruptions; no, we cannot entertain any such idea."

"Baptists! will you take them?" "No, no, we cannot. It's quite unthinkable. We baptize in the name of the Blessed Trinity, plunging our converts in clear water, to show how we emphasize purity in word and deed."

"Wesleyans! What do you say? Shall I knock them down to you?" "Oh! No. Good works is a matter of life with us. We cannot look at them."

And then he exclaimed at the top of his voice: "Who will take them?" He glances first to the right and then to the left, and finally imagines he can hear the devil say: "I will take them. Knock them down to me."

He begins slowly and cautiously, "One—two,—" but all of a sudden he turns to the right, and hears the sweet voice of Jesus say: "I will take them, poor and needy, sick and sore. Knock them down to me! The drunkard can be made sober, and the impure clean." And then he added with a great joy: "Blessed be His name, for His blood cleanseth from all sin."

His solemnity was always terribly impressive. He described perdition like Dante of old, as if he had explored its dark recesses, and his pictures of heaven were such as if he had always lived like the angels in that "better land." He possessed a wonderful gift of personifying men and things. The uplifted finger, and the outstretched hand were quite unforgettable. Eben Fardd in his Elegy speaks of his "pauses as mediums of pure oratory," and that has been interpreted to mean that he stuttered sometimes. But that is incorrect. I was brought up under the shadow of Kilsby Jones's quaint personality, who had heard John Elias preach more than once at Llandovery and Lampeter. Kilsby said that having reached his climax there would be a most dramatic pause, the tongue would then be silent, but the face was most eloquent, the eyes flashed and the lips quivered, until a

feeling of deep awe was spread over the assembled thousands. And it was that matchless power of restraint, with the exquisite pathos which followed, that made him the greatest orator Kilsby ever heard. He admitted that Ebenezer Morris had a richer voice, that Christmas Evans was more creative in the verility of his mind, and Williams of Wern a greater philosopher. But John Elias, in his judgment, stood supreme as the most gifted orator, pure and simple of the Welsh pulpit. His printed sermons, like Whitefield's, are a disappointment. "You cannot print a thunderstorm, and reproduce the lightning's flash," said Thomas Jones, the poet-preacher. And so with John Elias, he cannot be reproduced on paper. But tradition will always proclaim him to be our premier orator—the Welsh Gladstone—in very truth.

V.

UNCTION AND ETHICS.

THE two venerable preachers of the next period who stood in the front rank and became noted for the above qualities were Henry Rees, Liverpool, and John Jones, Talysarn. The former excelled in unction and intensity, while the latter in addition struck a clear ethical note, which redeemed the Connexion from the charge of Hyper-Calvinism sometimes brought against it in the time of John Elias.

HENRY REES (1798—1869). He was of a retiring disposition when young, but became deeply interested in preachers and preaching. When attending their meetings he frequently gave way to his emotions in the great revivals of those memorable years of the Almighty's right arm, when blessings were poured in such rich abundance on the land generally. All his acquaintances were prepared in this way to expect Henry Rees to develop into a preacher of great renown. There came a realization of more than all their early hopes, and to-day the seraphic Henry Rees is by common consent in some respects the most unctuous, chaste and perfect in style of all Welsh preachers. There never was a minister who more thoroughly consecrated all his manifold gifts to his high and holy calling than he. He concentrated all his attention on preaching, although he might have excelled as a poet of distinction, and a brilliant prose writer. But it was preaching that occupied his thoughts during the day and his dreams at night. Like Luther and Melancthon, he spent many long hours in his secret chamber with the Unseen, until like Moses of old his face shone with unspeakable glory.

His versatile brother—Dr. William Rees ("Hiraethog")—said jocularly: "They have used me like a shovel for all sorts of things. I only wish I had been as wise as my brother Henry, to confine myself entirely to preaching the Gospel."

Henry Rees combined the poet and philosopher, just as if Christmas Evans and Williams of Wern had been rolled into one to constitute the make-up of his consecrated powers. He also manifested a large measure of John Elias's sacred oratory. But he was far more methodical in his arrangement of thoughts than any of them, and the chain of his reasoning was logically perfect in all its parts, and most impressive throughout its whole structure. The first part of his discourse was strictly expository, and then he pursued his subject in all directions, until his resources developed and increased to such large dimensions that it became impossible to explore every avenue without a series of sermons on the same text, packed full of information, and charged with all the light and heat of his inexhaustible supplies. Before the close of his career he began clipping very closely his figures of speech, so as to leave no traces of his previous flowery diction. He bridled his imagination so sternly as to deprive his discourses of all the fanciful touches of other days. He defended himself on the plea that he was solemnly convinced that a preacher's mission in life was to instruct, convince and persuade men, rather than to amuse and entertain. Like Baxter he—

“Preached as if he ne'er would preach again,
And like a dying man to dying men.”

The conversion of men became his one great absorbing passion. He is accordingly remembered to-day chiefly because of the spiritual intensity of his preaching, and more especially the unction from the Holy One which was invariably upon him as he appeared before the people with a shining face as God's own ambassador. When commencing his discourse his delivery was more deliberate than John Elias's, but he raised his voice, the somewhat unhappy drawl of the utterance suddenly ceased, and his voice assumed the most exquisite modulation in notes of sweetest melody. He could change his position from Sinai to Calvary so as to produce a marvellous transformation scene.

He was the foremost leader of the Connexion for 30 years, and naturally came to his place of power after the death of John

Elias. He combined all the necessary attributes of a true and trusty counsellor. But the truest description of Henry Rees is not the astute ecclesiastic, nor the prophet and apostle only, although he was mighty in both capacities, but as the radiant Saint of our Connexion. He stood first and foremost as the holy man of God, with the affections of his countrymen centred on his great work in the Metropolis of the North, where he immigrated early in life from under the shadow of Mount Hiraethog and the banks of Aled, and the rural scenes of Denbighshire. Principal Edwards used to say that Henry Rees was without exception the greatest preacher in power and unction he had ever heard.

JOHN JONES, TALYSARN (1796—1857). This illustrious minister was the son of a small tenant farmer, but could trace his pedigree back to the proudest of the North Wales Princes, viz., Hedd Molwynog. His father died when the children were young, but a brother took a kindly interest in the orphans, and thought they were all promising, except "John, who lolls about silently like a suckling calf, and from whom I expect nothing." Poor purblind old uncle! It is mentioned that John when a mere boy used to preach to other boys as a fond pastime, and also frequently held forth to the poultry in the farmyard. Once when addressing the latter with great animation, he held out his little hands for dramatic effect, when his congregation of geese and ducklings became very demonstrative, anticipating that the hands were held out to feed them. "Now you just wait a moment, my little dears," responded the youthful preacher, "for it is too soon to sing yet. The meeting must be closed with prayer, and then it will be your turn to sing before I dismiss the audience." He was converted at Dolwyddelan during the great Beddgelert Revival when 22 years old, and preached for the first time at a farmhouse from Romans xiv. 17. His thoughts were very original from the very outset, for he had no books to consult except a few Welsh volumes. He ultimately made a fine collection of all that had been published in his mother tongue. He remained all through life a purely monoglot Welshman. However some of his younger friends, such as

Owen Thomas, afterwards Dr. Owen Thomas, Liverpool, would kindly translate to him the leading English publications, which he learned and digested with great avidity. He acquired a great popularity at once, which was not only retained but increased to the end, and became perpetuated in the current expression of "Pregethwr y Bobl"—"the people's preacher." And yet he was exceptionally genial, with the true modesty of a great man. He had a passion for souls, and held a strong aversion to the angry controversies of those days about doctrine, which divided Calvinists and Arminians. He firmly held to the conviction of man's own responsibility as an accountable being, but never disputed the sovereignty of God's grace. He was a very moderate Calvinist compared with John Elias and others, who for many years were extremists and Hyper-Calvinists, and was charged even with Antinomianism. "Why quarrel violently," said he, "about Predestination and Election, elect yourselves, here and now, or rather put your trust in God, and pray Him to bring you in now, this very moment, and He is infinitely just and merciful, and will not let you down. The conclusion of the whole matter is this—every man's condemnation comes not from any preferences on God's part, but rather from man's obstinacy and unbelief. Trust in God, accept Christ as your Saviour, and each one of you has the certain promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

He accomplished a great change in Welsh preaching, for although well proved in all doctrine, he emphasized the supremacy of practical Christianity, and insisted on the prominence of the ethical note in all his pronouncements. His wholesome influence ultimately led to a closer re-union of all the Evangelical Communion, so that to-day, the many thousands of sanctuaries on the hills and in the valleys of Wales, instead of being monuments to perpetuate angry controversies, now dead and forgotten, are largely centres of spiritual activities to the glory of God and the welfare of our Fatherland. His principal feature was picturesque power. His pillars were strong and massive, but the lily work was also on the top. He never copied any of John Elias's dramatic gestures, but the outstretched arm was significant of the latent power, which culminated in

a climax that overwhelmed the assembled crowds with its matchless force. He was gifted with an organ voice, greater in range, with more capacity for a variety of expression than any other since the days of Ebenezer Morris. It was troubled with some little sluggishness at the start, which was profanely called "the Talysarn cough," but that invariably disappeared as he became absorbed in his subject, until everybody was captured by the magnificent sway of his sanctified oratory. His power of self-control was supreme amid the most embarrassing manifestations of a congregation which frequently became "God-intoxicated" in very truth.

He had a deep and permanent experience of his divine message, and could testify with the inspired Apostle—"that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life."

He will always be remembered not only as a preacher of passion and power in his efforts to regenerate the individual, but also as the first trumpet voice which called the scattered hosts of Israel throughout the land, to a unity of the spirit in advancing the Kingdom of our common Lord and Master. That vision of cheerful co-operation had been almost lost in Wales, and it was the seer of Talysarn that restored the lost accent and forgotten emphasis.

VI.

GUARDIANS OF THE FAITH.

AMID all the mighty upheavals occasioned by the impassioned preachers mentioned in the previous chapters the Lord raised other servants who were "Guardians of the Faith," and great teachers of the essential doctrines of Christianity. Not that these profound thinkers were indifferent to the salvation of souls, and yet it has been observed with truth that obviously their greatest mission in life was to *save doctrines*. Foremost in this category were Dr. Lewis Edwards and Principal D. Charles Davies.

PRINCIPAL LEWIS EDWARDS, M.A., D.D. (1809—1887). It was he who founded the Colleges of our Connexion, and had a leading hand in establishing the first University College of Wales at Aberystwyth. During his tenure of office as Principal at Bala, more than 700 young preachers passed under his influence to become ministers and centres of power in their high and holy work. It was he who mainly established the Pastorate, the Sustentation Fund, and almost every other project of the period. Others helped very materially, but the inspiration and statesmanship came from his rich and capacious mind. He was Moderator of the General Assembly in 1866 and 1876, which indicates his exceptional position of supremacy amongst the other leaders.

He founded "The Essayist" in 1845, which awakened the mind of Wales, and led it to explore the ample fields of all Literature, Ancient and Modern, fostering the desire to reach the distant horizons of other lands, but not forsaking its own treasures, buried in oblivion, such as the products of Morgan Llwyd o Wynedd, Dafydd Ionawr, &c. Dr. Edwards clearly saw the vast possibilities of the nation in general, and of his own

Connexion in particular, once they experienced a great intellectual awakening.

I remember, when young, taking a part in the chairing of a bard for a poem on "Futurity." Well of all the leaders of our country it was Dr. Edwards who excelled in having this full "sense of posterity" on him, girding all the elements of his great and versatile personality. And as he occupies easily the supreme position as a *thinker* amongst our pulpit giants, he also occasionally conducted services that have never been surpassed in their spiritual power and unction. He introduced a new method of thought into the study of Welsh theology, which while it safely guarded all that was valuable in the old system, yet stood up bravely for unifying the great truths, and expounding them on the lines of true philosophy. It was his strong conviction that this principle of unification was indispensable in order to truly comprehend the meaning of the Queen of Sciences. The mere title of his articles, "The Harmony of the Faith," is very significant, and his writings contain the best proof of his supremacy over all his predecessors in the Principality in both originality and lucidity.

He raised in this way all Christian doctrines above the raging and tearing controversies, which for many years had embittered the religious life of our native land. He showed that spirit of inherent harmony which pervaded the whole when viewed from a lofty altitude that revealed all the landscape.

It had always been his cherished conviction that Calvinism was unrivalled as a closely reasoned theological system, but he rejected some of its conclusions nevertheless, because he felt the Bible was not to be governed by any cast-iron system of logic. It was rather a progressive revelation, the result of the seeds cast into the soil by the Divine Spirit which must continue to develop and grow to the end of time. So that the Book of God is greater than a system however clear and logical its arguments.

Dr. Lewis Edwards had also an element of mysticism in his nature, conspicuously absent in Calvin, which made him worship before the great mystery of Godliness in the Incarnation and Atonement, a mystery which baffled definitions and defied all

sylogisms, but which received the ardent allegiance of every devout soul. Hyper-Calvinism gradually faded away with the advent of Dr. Edwards. He set all doctrines on the solid foundation of God's Word in all its entirety, and in harmony with progressive revelation, discarding the previous fashion of bolstering up beliefs by scattered texts from all quarters of Scripture, quite independent of their immediate context and historic setting. Although of a conservative nature, like all Celts, yet he was the most ready of thinkers to greet any new light, and was the poles asunder from another distinguished Welshman from near Aberystwyth—Isaac Williams, a leader of the Tractarian Movement, who clung to the mechanical authority of an infallible church. Dr. Edwards based his faith on those eternal principles which always existed in God, and became also a part of man's inheritance, indicating that such an affinity with God proved that absolute certainty in matters of faith were clearly within our province individually, and not forbidden by any external authority however venerable or imposing.

It was on that foundation that his theology rested with all earnestness and breadth, applying the method of antithesis to the solution of all problems.

He was also a prince amongst preachers, and when stirred to the depths of his soul he carried all before him by the power of his ministry. I have heard him described by three different authorities, whose capacity for judging must be indisputable in each case.

The first was Principal D. Charles Davies, when staying at a farm house in Merthyr Cynog, when preaching at a Monthly Meeting in Breconshire, during the last year of his life. "I have heard," said he, "in my life three very remarkable sermons in both conception and power of delivery, and the effects in each case were so terrible that I am never likely to forget them either in time or eternity. And the greatest of the three very clearly was that by Dr. Edwards of Bala." I still remember with keen interest the flash of his eye as he told the tidings before the blazing peat fire of that old-fashioned homestead on the slopes of Epynt. He made no effort to reproduce any of the sermon, but it was at an Association held at Bangor many

years previously, in 1871, that he received the unforgettable impression.

The second testimony is the vivid word-picture of Dr. Cyn-dylan Jones's account of the Association at Llanilar, when Dr. Edwards preached nearly 70 years ago on "I AM THAT I AM" (Exodus iii. 14). The congregation consisted principally of farmers and the peasantry of the adjoining hamlets. They were all lost in a feeling of deep adoration and wonderment, when suddenly there drove past in his carriage a Greek scholar of European fame, and like Dr. Edwards himself a Cardigan-shire man. He was none other than Archdeacon John Williams, the first Warden of Llandovery College, and who read the burial service over Sir Walter Scot's grave, when principal of the Edinburgh High School. He stopped the carriage, and took off his hat, and listened with great reverence and devotion. In a few minutes the Venerable Archdeacon was weeping copious tears, completely subdued by the manifestations of Divine power, like the unsophisticated peasantry around him. Eternity had been brought so near, until all the assembled thousands were crushed by the overwhelming weight of glory.

The other description is by the late Mr. David Evans, Docks, Cardiff, the eldest son of "Old Tonyrefail," and father of the late Rev. W. Evans, M.A., Pembroke Dock. Dr. Edwards was officiating at the Welsh Chapel, in Londoun Square, Cardiff, in the summer of 1863. His subject was: "And He who ascended is He who also descended." The delivery was terrible in its general effect, and although there was no melody in the voice, some strange extraordinary power manifested itself in the trumpet tones, so as to sweep all before them. His appearance was stately, but not pompous, and the living embodiment of a quiet dignity and devotion. All the leading ministers of the city of all Denominations were present, and one of them—a Congregationalist, himself a master of assemblies, whispered at the close: "What a powerful preacher, his intensity penetrates to every nook and corner of the soul." Mr. D. Evans himself adds: "It was far and away the greatest shaking I had ever experienced, and my father came over from Tonyrefail, and was all aglow with joy, sometimes jumping with all the ecstasy of the old revivals, and sometimes weeping like a child."

It appears that he preached the same sermon at the Llantwit Major Association soon afterwards, which was also a memorable occasion, when Dr. T. Phillips, of Hereford, usually so faultlessly correct, forgot himself in his enraptured enthusiasm, throwing his silk hat about like a whirligig. This proves sufficiently clear that Dr. Edwards at his best was a preacher who equalled any of the Fathers in that soul-subduing power which captivated the people all over Wales.

It was generally admitted by the eminent men of all Denominations that he was the greatest Divine of our country in his own day, and the present Bishop of St. David's, in his recent recollections to "Y Llan"—the Church Weekly—describes him as the deepest and most massive thinker of his own generation in Wales.

PRINCIPAL D. CHARLES DAVIES, M.A. (1826—1891). Although singled out by nature and grace to be a teacher he never became one officially until almost the end of his career in 1889. It is true that he refused an invitation to preside over Trevecca a quarter of a century earlier.

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform."

If the young ministers of South Wales suffered a great loss because of his long absence from their College, the young people of London and Bangor greatly profited by his remarkably able lectures, packed full of the acutest thoughts, and most extraordinary powers of criticism, especially in their bearing upon the scepticism of the age.

As a general observation it is safe to maintain that there never was a preacher more luminous and acute, more searching in his argumentative powers, with an inexhaustible wealth of the most brilliant thoughts on all occasions.

On the maternal side he was a grandson of David Charles, Carmarthen, the greatest Divine amongst the Fathers in South Wales. And one of his delights was to describe how as a boy he used to hear his father tell the delightful story of how the "Confession of Faith" was drafted in a special room at their

home in Aberystwyth in 1823, so that he was steeped very early in the best traditions of Calvinistic Methodism. He entered Bala College as a boy, but always remembered the discussions of the professors and students about Jonathan Edwards's Dissertation on "The Freedom of the Will." Thus when only 12 years old his mind was awakened to the importance of theological studies. However, having graduated with distinction at the London University, he conceived the idea of being called to the Bar. I heard him say myself that the most eminent of all his friends and fellow-students at that time was the late Sir Henry Matthews, who became Lord Llandaff, and was descended from the ancient Matthews family of Glamorgan. His branch of the clan had emigrated to Ireland, and were staunch Roman Catholics. The two brilliant Celtic lads were thrown together thus, because Oxford was closed to all Dissenters, Catholic and Protestant alike. Despite this association with a youth who adopted the Law as his calling, attaining the highest distinction, David Charles Davies decided eventually on the Methodist Pulpit, mainly through his mother's influence, and was unquestionably one of Heaven's greatest gifts to our Connexion. He was not exactly of the same type as his old teacher and life-long friend, Dr. Lewis Edwards.

It is Dr. Cynddylan Jones who has best of all described their affinities and contrasts: "Principal D. Charles Davies had a matchless genius for minute, that is to say, exact thinking, following what philosophers describe as the analytic method. Whereas Dr. L. Edwards was notable for the depth and massiveness of his thoughts, and was in his element with the synthetic method. The first was a microscope revealing the splendour of texts when broken up into gold dust, and the second a telescope sweeping the heavens, showing the wonders of the planets revolving in their courses in the far-off immensities." One revelled in construction, and the other in analysis, but both in harmony with the faith as revealed in Scripture.

There never was a keener interpreter of his text than Principal D. Charles Davies. He would fix upon the most prominent word or expression, tracing it all through the chapter, and sometimes the Gospel or Epistle, but not on the old-fashioned

lines of the Concordance, so glaringly mechanical for he opened up a gold mine of riches in every observation. He sometimes said that there had been three periods in his preaching. First of all it was the period of pretty things, when he was enamoured of the gorgeous and beautiful. Then he outgrew that, and arrived at the second period, that of interpreting words, but last and best of all it was a passion for discovering principles, and elucidating the abstract truth. He was strictly accurate in his style of reasoning, and insisted that all the replies to his questions in the classes should be given with mathematical precision. His pet aversion was a loose, slovenly, careless method of thinking. His sentences were short, but sparkling, and yet with no effort or affectation whatsoever. His voice was not strong, but easy and conversational, and he proved it possible to rivet the attention of the masses without the silver trumpets of the giants which had gone before. In his own key-note he was a most natural speaker, full and free, with no dreamy, far-away glances in his beaming eyes. He looked all around with great alertness, and soon discovered the best listeners, concentrating attention on them to the end. In this way he intensified the interest of all sections, and like the Master of old "the common people heard him gladly." He courageously met all the difficulties created by the discoveries of science, and his lectures in this capacity are the finest in the language. And such as were translated into English won for him the esteem of generous opponents like Professor Huxley and Mr. Herbert Spencer. He pointed to Butler as the greatest of his early teachers, but he knew that the standpoint of to-day was considerably changed, and he accordingly accommodated himself to the new position. He was a "guardian of the faith" because he clung in the main to the old doctrines, and yet greeting very cordially any new light from any quarter. His lectures at Bala in 1871 on "The Inspiration of the Bible" foreshadowed many of the views about progressive revelation preached on the housetop to-day. He pointed out "the analogy between God in the flesh and God in the Book. The child Jesus grew in stature and in knowledge, and wisdom and favour, and the Bible also grew through those stages of infancy, and

childhood in the Old Testament to the full maturity of the complete revelation of the New Testament in Christ and His salvation. Our Saviour suffered from human infirmities in this life, which were sinless and inseparably connected with His humanity. In the same way, there are minor errors in the Bible, associated with the purely human elements, but they also are sinless, and never detract from the unapproachable grandeur of the Divine Revelation contributed to the race." That was written nearly 50 years ago, and affects the whole core and kernel of present day controversies about the inerrancy and authority of Scripture.

His able successor, Dr. Owen Prys, observes: "The analytic nature of his thinking was truly exceptional. He delighted in raising difficulties and solving them. I never met anybody who seemed to take such a keen interest in what may be regarded as merely intellectual riddles. No athlete ever felt as delighted in the field as he did in these mental gymnastics. His was a critical rather than a constructive mind. What always impressed me as the most remarkable thing in his mental and spiritual life was the combination of the critical mind with the most absolutely implicit and childlike faith in the great truths of the Gospel, and a truly sublime reverence in the presence of things sacred. However great he was as a thinker, he was quite as great, to say the least, as a *saint*. He was our great genius-saint."

The following extract from his address on Church Polity is a proof of his loyalty to, and affection for our Connexion:—

"May the Lord God of our fathers continue to guide our beloved Connexion through all the changes of the years. May it never fall into the decrepitude of old age, and the imbecility of a second childhood. But rather may it renew daily its perennial youth, like the angel which appeared at our Saviour's tomb on His resurrection morning. It was many thousands of years old, and yet young and beautiful. And may our Tribe in Israel have likewise the Divine enthusiasm of youth in all its projects and movements, from age to age. When that far off

Divine event comes for it to pass away, when all the Denominations of this world shall be dissolved, may its departure be like that of Moses, its eye not dim, nor its natural force abated, and may its burial also like that of Moses be conducted by the Lord Himself, on the borders of that 'better land,' where all the communions of earth will be lost in the one great and glorious Church, purer than the light and brighter than the sun."

It is certain that Principal D. Charles Davies stood in the front rank of our pulpit giants in natural gifts, culture and devotion.

VII.

MIGHT AND MAJESTY.

REV. EDWARD MATTHEWS (1813—1892). Matthews was a monarch amongst princes, and towered above all his contemporaries in wealth of imagery, and powers of intuition. His penetrative genius always reached the heart of a text with no effort at anything in the nature of the usual forms of arbitrary logic. He was known as a poet of no mean order, although never initiated into the mysterious rites of the Bardic Gorsedd of poor old Iolo Morgannwg, who was also a product of the same district in the Vale of Glamorgan. Mr. Matthews alighted like the royal eagle on the core of his message, and his large and lustrous eye enveloped the subject with a "light that never was on sea or shore."

Like "Jones, Talysarn," he also was of a noble lineage, for the blood of the old Glamorgan princes coursed freely through his veins. It may be that heredity counts for something, in spite of the tendency in these democratic days to dismiss it with a nod and a sneer. Science seems to declare "that every man is an omnibus with his ancestors as in-side passengers." Our hero had all the traces of true dignity on his brow, and the leisured ease and grace of the old nobility marked his movements. He believed that politeness should be cultivated by ministers of religion. At the Wrexham Association in 1878, when delivering his "Charge," having dwelt with power on the greatest things of all, he called attention to the importance of "small things." "Take care," said he, "to be always on your good behaviour. Cultivate good manners. Above all things, be gentlemen in the trains, stations, and especially the homes of the people. Never be coarse and rude, let the details of life be performed in the spirit of that 'wisdom from above,' which is first pure, the peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and

without hypocrisy." And yet although alive to the proprieties of good breeding, he never showed any trace of any affectation whatever.

His father was intimately connected with the squirearchy, but had wasted his substance in riotous living, attending the horse-racing and the usual pastimes of the idle rich. One of Mr. Matthews's earliest recollections was of his father placing him safely in the saddle to ride a pony at the Bridgend races. Being at the time young, a light weight, and skilful in his handling of ponies, he stood a good chance of winning the race. He was proud of his father's confidence, and inspired the pony with some of his own courage, until it eventually swept past all the others, winning a handsome prize to replenish the fortunes of an ancient and noble family now on the down grade. It is curious to imagine to-day how one of the most potent forces of the Welsh pulpit made his first appearance before the public as his father's jockey!

He commenced preaching at Hirwaen. The gate was narrow, and his progress for some time slow, like that of Dr. Lewis Edwards. However before entering Trevecca he discovered his own peculiar gifts, and they were the most picturesque and dramatic of any since Robert Roberts, Clynnog. He began his discourse in a rather slow colloquial fashion, speaking the dialect of the Vale of Glamorgan. His sentences appeared to be bare and broken, speaking more in the expressions of his face, eyes, and the action of his hand, than in his words. He would really suggest a great deal more than what was actually expressed in language. There never was a face so full of expression since John Elias, but he also had the creative faculty of Christmas Evans, and a dramatic power beyond any other pulpit orator of his own day. And the beauty of it all was its spontaneity, with no suggestion of any effort in previous discipline or preparation.

It was the perfection of art, and the very essence of naturalness combined to produce the happiest and the most extraordinary effects.

The late Lady Llanover said that he intoned the promises of Scripture with a greater charm than the sweetest music of

the triple harp of her Court at the festivities of St. David's Day. On the other hand when hurling denunciation his mouth would be the thunder's chosen home, and with a frowning brow he would open his eyes (at other times half closed) like two blazing furnaces, diffusing their fierce indignation all over the place. Who could ever forget the long swelling notes of that mighty voice, matchless in its huge volume and plaintive melody. Having practised so much restraint for a great part of the sermon, when the people were kept in breathless suspense, he now rolls it out in a grand outburst of indescribable power and pathos, and then abruptly closes the meeting, with all hearts melted into a willing submission to the appeals of his God-given message.

There are many examples of his peculiar style still extant but all attempts at portraying his must necessarily be very imperfect. He preached before the Rev. Henry Rees in an Association at Aberystwyth in 1861. His text was Matthew xviii. 14. He went on to show how extremely unhappy it was to lose anything, and more especially "one of these little ones," citing the case of a poor obscure peasant whom he called "Shôn." He was of no account in life and when he shuffled off this mortal coil would not be missed, nor would anybody place a rough stone with the two carved letters at the head of his lonely grave. It was never thought worth while to ask Shôn to open the Sunday School with a short prayer, although he was always present. The weekly prayer meeting would be prematurely closed with less than the usual number of prayers rather than run any risk by calling on Shôn to petition the throne of grace. There doesn't seem to be any hole which Shôn can usefully fill. But wait a moment, the infinite God sees something good and to the point in Shôn. He is too valuable to be lost. If Shôn were lost there would be confusion in heaven, for the Saviour has given His word of honour that not one of these little ones shall go astray. And if Shôn perished angels and archangels, Uriel and Gabriel, would begin to tremble, doubting the security of their own position. The Divine decrees would be shattered, and the General Assembly of the first born in heaven would break up if Shôn were not there

to answer his name. If there is no gap on earth at Shôn's departure heaven will be all gaps, full of holes, if Shôn does'nt reach his destination—'one of these little ones.' And then the shout would follow in all the thrilling beauty of its cadencies, repeating the text through all the modulations of his extraordinarily rich voice.

He preached at the Brecon Association in 1865 on the two houses, "one founded on the rock and the other on the sand." "They were both built," said the preacher, "in a narrow valley, under the shadow of the adjoining hills. The first was a cottage," said he, "and it was a long time before any of it came to sight at all. The man who built it was digging down, like an arrant fool, instead of building up and piling the stones artistically on each other as capable builders do. He is the laughing stock of everybody, but you wait, he laughs best who laughs last. It may be there's a method in his madness after all. But it doesn't look like it. The stones carted to the building are rough and unhewn stones. The windows are so small and the roof so low, and only thatched with the mountain rushes. Everybody laughs at that poor and paltry little hut, apparently so useless. But the other is a gorgeous palace. All the stones are carefully chiselled. The pillars are of marble, the spacious rooms are gilded, and all the windows large and of plate glass. They all praise the aesthetic taste of the gentleman who erects that noble structure. Whatever else he doesn't know, he at any rate understands architecture. He is an authority in the building line. One afternoon two farmers are returning from the market. 'Can you hear the rustling wind?' said one. 'Yes, there's a storm approaching us in the distance,' replied his friend. 'That's certain. Can't you see the animals rushing for safety in advance.' The storm comes in all its desolating fury. It rushes down the valley, uprooting the trees, smashing into smithereens the stately forests which had stood their ground like the Grenadier Guards from time immemorial. The roofs are blown off the farm-houses, the barns are torn into tatters, and all the elements of nature battling in a wild frenzy throughout the whole district. The rain comes down in torrents, the rivers are swollen into

seas, and the whole valley covered with a flood, like the Atlantic. On the morrow the two farmers meet again. 'Where's the palace?' asks one. 'Exactly,' replied the other, 'where is it too, that fine imposing mansion, that was a credit to the countryside. I cannot see the slightest trace of it.' 'Nor can I,' replied his friend. 'But wait! Lo and behold, the cottage is up. The little hut has survived all the fury of the storm! Can't you see it strong and stable. It stands unshaken like a piece of granite rock, amid all the rack and ruin.' "

The great preacher described the changing scenes with a dramatic power that mesmerized the congregation. And then came the spiritual application in all the full organ tones of his marvellous voice at the close, reciting :—

" Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,"

or some Welsh equivalent.

The huge congregation stands on its feet, instinctively, and the echoes of yonder Brecknock Beacons are awakened, resounding to the shouts of hymns ascending from the hearts of the assembled throng.

Such were the experiences oftentimes repeated when Mr. Matthews was at the height of his power. He passed away in his 80th year, and with him there disappeared the finest combination of dramatic power, picturesque imagination, and a voice of range and pathos, witnessed in Wales during the last 60 years.

THE REV. OWEN THOMAS, D.D. (1812—1891).—He was the most prominent minister in the highest circles of our Connexion, in both North and South Wales for half a century, combining in himself the highest gifts of statesmanship and pulpit oratory. He fared better than some of his contemporaries, by coming to great publicity when young. He occupied a great position on the temperance platform before he began preaching. The doors of the pulpit were widely opened before him, and he felt as much at home there as if he had been born in it, without any shadow of fear, even when as a young man he as-

cended the most staggering heights when preaching with John Elias.

His preparatory course commenced at Bala, and was completed in Glasgow University. He was always a great reader of Commentaries, Systematic Theology, and General Literature, which is amply proved by his masterly reviews in the old "Traethodydd." He seems to have been the nearest approach in Wales to Lord Macaulay, with his miraculous memory, a veritable "book in breeches." But he was also an impassioned orator, of a mercurial temperament, with all the fire of an impetuous Celtic nature burning in his bones. He was reared under the shadow of John Elias, and had heard him preach on many occasions. I was told by the late Sir Marchant Williams that he heard Sir Hugh Owen say that Dr. Owen Thomas was the nearest approach to John Elias of any preacher he knew. The facial expression and gestures were almost identical, but John Elias was a trifle swifter in some of his more intrepid outbursts. Dr. Owen Thomas differed from Mr. Matthews, the great pulpit dramatist of South Wales, because of the active co-operation between his language and gestures, whereas the tongue and lips of Mr. Matthews usually rested when his eyes and hands were used to mesmerize the crowds.

There was a Gallery of Ministers' portraits at the old Chapel House of my native hamlet, and the one which attracted most attention was that of Dr. Owen Thomas. His mouth was obviously formed for oratory. It was like Daniel Rowlands' large and wide, and quivering with emotion. Old Kilsby Jones, always eccentric to a fault, spoke of certain mouths which were nothing more than potato traps. But this great preacher's inspired lips were the chosen home of stately eloquence. The face was leonine, with a forehead broad and high, and the eyes full and sparkling. He had a thick head of hair, with its locks untrimmed like the Spirit of Confusion itself. When I heard both Mr. Matthews and Dr. Owen Thomas in 1884 for the first time at an Association in Llanwrtyd I could see how time had changed their countenances since those handsome portraits were taken which impressed me so much as a boy. But their voices were still magnificent, and their dramatic powers most impressive.

It appears that Dr. Owen Thomas applied himself to the pulpit very assiduously, although he was a great writer of marked ability, and as a Biographer stands unrivalled in Wales, as Boswell does in England. But he confined himself to the Memoirs of conspicuous ministers, such as Jones Talysarn and Henry Rees. He also contemplated writing a Biography of John Elias, but it was not to be, and the project never matured because of his death in 1891. All his interests were centred on the pulpit, and all his vast resources used to advance its power. He was quite as skilful in producing sermons as he was eloquent in the matter of their delivery. Dr. Cynddylan Jones, himself a homilist of the highest capacity, writes that Dr. Owen Thomas was a sermon builder of the first order, combining great powers of thought, with the most stirring eloquence. His introduction was always a masterly piece of Biblical criticism, condensing all the contents of the section into one main proposition, which subsequently became the leading idea of the sermon. He usually had his divisions, and sometimes sub-divisions, with a beautiful unity pervading the whole, so that the symmetry was complete and perfect. But apart from the construction of his sermons he had a wonderful gift of oratory, the irresistible power of which swept all before it.

There used to be a curious tradition in South Wales hitting off the different characteristics of three giants when preaching "Repentance":—

"Repent!" uttered Henry Rees, with a quiet power, his voice choking with emotion, "repent! or you will break my heart."

"Repent!" exclaimed John Jones, Talysarn, in his full-toned, melodious voice, with just a touch of irony, "repent, or you should be heartily ashamed of yourselves!"

And then Dr. Owen Thomas would thunder with a strong indisputable authority ringing in his voice, "Repent! Repent! Repent! or I shall compel you to do it."

The implications of the story show the strong will-power and masterfulness which invariably accompanied his sermons.

The appeals to individuals, which came with such force and directness, were prominent features of his preaching. "Didn't your mother say so, John, when packing your box, before you went to the station, don't you remember the parting words, as the copious tears trickled down her dear old face?" "Mary! have you forgotten the Old Family Bible, which opened spontaneously on the Psalms and the Gospels in your father's and mother's little cottage, and whose verses were taught you by loving lips, now mouldering in the grave? Have you forgotten all about it, Mary? Isn't the Word of God still a lamp to your feet, and a light to your paths?"

Those references, so simple, were yet most powerful, when uttered with such tenderness in his own incomparable way.

Preaching once on the "Nearness of the Kingdom of God," he said: "We cannot climb to heaven this moment to examine the Book of Life, and see whether our names are recorded or not therein. And even if we could, the scroll would be too high and holy for us to interpret. But, the Kingdom, my dear young friends, is very near unto you. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, rely on His Atonement, and I assure you that the doctrine of election will never stand in your way. The Kingdom is quite within your reach, in all the power of its tender exhortations, and the free grace of its terms. Young men! will you listen to me—the Gospel is a ladder, your father and mother climbed it to heaven, to the sunshine of the Saviour's own presence, and they now exclaim in a loud voice from the heights of glory—'Climb up here.' What are you doing, my young friend? Climbing? No! You are not climbing to heaven. You have turned the ladder upside down. You are not ascending to heaven, but rather descending to perdition. Will you not halt and reverse the order, turning your face from the dark depths below, to the sunny heights above?"

These personal appeals frequently went home with the most telling effects.

In both the construction and delivery of his sermons, and especially in his passion for the conversion of sinners, Dr. Owen Thomas occupied a unique position amongst the giants of the pulpit.

VIII.

PROPHETS OF YESTERDAY.

REV DAVID SAUNDERS, D.D. (1831—1892).—This eminent minister was regarded as a model preacher in his day, labouring with great success in different places in South Wales and Liverpool. His brilliant career was brought to a close at Trinity, Swansea, where he presided as pastor for the last 25 years of his life. There was a combination of all the elements which constitute a great and popular preacher in Dr. Saunders. His majestic presence, as he stood facing the congregation, with all manliness and assurance, was most impressive. The deep and yet resonant tones of his voice were admirably sustained in all their strength and sweetness to the end. It was not the long, full-throated, far reaching shout of Mr. Matthews, nor the trumpet voice of "Old Blaenannerch," but a voice which like the in-coming tide gathered power almost imperceptibly, for he had the rare gift of that self-restraint which never permitted the wild emotional temperament of the Welsh people to go out of hand, until he had enlightened their minds and captured the understanding heart. When the organ voice had reached the top notes he would vary the intonation with all the sweetness of an angel's harp.

Both philosopher and poet were well balanced in the substance of his elaborate discourse. Not that he coveted the term of "poet-preacher" invariably applied to his contemporaries—"Islwyn" and Rev. Evan Phillips. But there was a rich vein of genuine poetry in his nature, fixed on the bedrock of the evangelical truth as it is found in Jesus. I heard Principal T. C. Edwards preach his funeral sermon, and the adjective he deliberately used to describe him was "beautiful," referring continually to Dr. Saunders as "this most beautiful preacher." And I thought the epithet coming from such

an authority was significant of much. Beautiful thoughts and a beautiful manner were eminently characteristic of his ministry. He never indulged in a multiplicity of gesture, but his strong right arm was frequently in evidence, driving the truth home to the mind and heart. He never claimed any great originality as a thinker, and was not in the category of Dr. Lewis Edwards and Principal D. Charles Davies in that respect, but with the keen observation of his large and searching eye, which like Christmas Evans' would almost set a forest on fire, he would scour the universe of nature and art for materials, and such was his power of arrangement, coupled with a rich spiritual glow, that every sermon bore the stamp of his own individuality, and became "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever," "apples of gold in pictures of silver." Dr. Saunders differed from Henry Rees, who became more sparing in his use of metaphors as he advanced in years, but the subject of this sketch multiplied them with the happiest results to the end. But there was also a massiveness in every sermon, which precluded the illustrations from being unnecessary adornments. Dr. Cynddylan Jones mentions that certain sermons are "all legs and wings with no body whatsoever," but Dr. Saunders was the poles asunder from these monstrosities. There was a sudden transition sometimes from the sweetest melody to the ruggedness of the declamatory style. "You don't suppose that the great God of Holiness is going to permit a host of scoundrels to gather around His throne in the celestial city? No! a thousand times—No! The citizens of that country are all changed in Christ to His own image, reflecting His glory to the endless ages of eternity. Make no mistake about it. Heaven is a clean place for clean people. It is the habitation of purity, beautified with that holiness which is supreme in God."

He was usually very tender, and when a number of children were once asked, "Who was the minister most of all like Jesus Christ?" they replied in a chorus, "Dr. Saunders." The following is a quotation from his Ministerial Charge at Llanrwst in 1884, revealing his own conception of the ministry: "Let your full human nature in all its entirety be thrown into

both the composition and delivery of your sermons. There are some who are very complete everywhere except in the pulpit, where many elements of their nature are conspicuously absent. Consecrate every gift, talent, and emotion to the Gospel. If you have a glowing imagination employ it to verify the narrations of Scripture. If you are strong in argument like Paul, then argue with all the force of your logical powers from Scripture. Yes, and even if there be any humour in your natures, let it be well and truly used, only always remembering that 'holiness to the Lord' must be inscribed on its bridles. Determine to be perfectly natural, and preach to the whole man, his intellect, heart, and conscience. Run your fingers skilfully over all the strings of your hearers' humanity, until you hear in response the loud strains of 'glory (not to you) to Him who loved us and redeemed us with His precious blood.' It is sufficient to say that he experienced largely a realization of his own ideal.

THE REV. JOHN HUGHES, D.D. (1827—1893). He was one of Mona's illustrious sons, but occupied a prominent Liverpool pulpit for 31 years, subsequently removing to Engedi, Carnarvon, for the last four years of his fruitful life. He was eminent as an author and preacher, and frequently officiated on great occasions in both North and South Wales. He began studying in his youth the works of Butler, Paley, and the Puritan divines. When a student at Bala, he greatly admired both the depth and massiveness of Dr. Edwards, and these influences are clearly revealed in the construction of his own sermons, in both matter and diction. But the first preacher to stir his soul to its utmost depths was the Rev. W. Roberts, Amlwch. As a boy he was extremely vivacious, and a certain element of playfulness clung to him all through life. No one ever moving in the highest circles of our Connexion, was more gifted than he with an inexhaustible fund of humour, but he endeavoured to hold the bridle tolerably tight, with admirable sanity and self-possession. It has been observed that Calvinism tamed the natural exuberance of the Welsh people, who are by instinct the most mercurial of all the Celtic nations.

Is it possible that the current tradition of the solemnity of Anglesea's giant preachers from John Elias to William Roberts, Amlwch, clipped very considerably the wings of Dr. John Hughes' playful fancy and witticism, so as not to stagger the sedateness of his graver brethren?

I first saw him at an Association in Rhymney in 1888. There was a merry twinkle in his lustrous eye, and a radiant smile flitted like an angel's wing over his broad, full face, signifying that gloom and despair received only a scant welcome under the roof of his spacious tabernacle. But he cherished the conviction that a quiet dignity should govern the pulpit, and that the first and last element of success there was a complete dedication and sanctification of one's gifts to its great mission. All of Dr. Hughes' energies had an immediate bearing on "the pulpit." He was a prolific writer, but all his productions were connected with his sacred office. The following are some of his writings: "Butler's Analogy" (a translation into Welsh); "The Unity of Scripture," "The Ministry" (College Lectures); "The History of the Doctrine;" several commentaries on separate Books of Scripture—notably in "The Family Bible" and "Sunday School Testament" Series. He also contributed scores of articles to "Y Traethodydd," "Geninen," and "Y Drysorfa." His model as a writer was Dr. Lewis Edwards. His sentences were well-formed and finished in their style. The vocabulary was peculiarly chaste, but his ear was not so sensitive to the music of old Welsh idioms as Puleston's, and he never understood the charm and power of the new school of Welsh writers, holding the field to-day, and with a touch of sly humour referred to Sir Owen Edwards' Welsh as parochial or Llanuwchllyn Welsh. But for stateliness, sonorous periods, and a diction invariably impressive, he was unrivalled among his own peers, until the advent of "Brynsiencyn," who obviously modelled his style on Dr. Hughes', and became his biographer. His Lectures on Theology at Bala College for two years prove his capacity as a teacher of no mean order, although he was never technically a Professor.

He was extremely popular with the students, easy-going, brimful of good humour and rousing their curiosity in a heavy

academic atmosphere, with sometimes very fantastic questions, such as, "Who was the Sphinx, was he a Jew or a Gentile?" But that was only a little by-play, for he knew how to get the serious part of the College work accomplished, and despite an apparent absence of any scientific methods, his motto was "Thorough."

As a preacher, Dr. Owen Thomas sums him up as follows:—"It was not a musical voice, nor the sensation of striking anecdotes that contributed to Dr. Hughes' power, but rather, an exceptional skill in expounding with great lucidity the truths of Scripture, perfect fairness in defending his views, and a perfect self-control, resulting from his spiritual experience and wide knowledge. There was also a matchless beauty of literary diction, and best of all a Divine unction."

His successor at Liverpool for many years—Rev. J. Hughes, M.A., now of Bridgend—has described with his usual skill many of his great services ("Y Geninen," 1897). The conclusion of all is this—that his sermons were always elaborate and profound, with just a little effort in the delivery at the beginning, until the voice had been cleared of all huskiness. Eventually it raised in full sail on the sublimest flood of oratory, with the whole congregation floating joyfully on its billows. His scriptural references were almost as apt as those of "old Carno" himself, and his word-pictures gleamed with humor and poetry." He could also sometimes make his personal appeals with great effect. When speaking once of the "Ordinances of Grace" he said:—"Just think of the price paid to secure them! Have you ever thought of their cost to God Himself? We must go further back than Bala, Llangetho, and Talgarth, further back than Westminster's Catechism, and all the Church Councils. Yes—they are attached to Bethlehem and the Incarnation. These 'means of grace,' despised by so many to-day, are associated with Gethsemane, its Divine agony and bloody sweat! There would be no prayer meetings here, any more than in the dark region of the lost, were it not that God appeared in the There would be no prayer meetings here, any more than in the Gehenna down below, with its wailing and gnashing of teeth, were it not for the Death of the Cross. There would be no

prayer in Britain to-day any more than in Hell were it not for the Atonement of Calvary. Beware that you do not neglect these ordinances, my beloved people. I have never yet seen men who wilfully neglect the Sanctuary die well. Just think of it. The man never misses a market or a fair, nor any other opportunity to advance his temporal interests. But as for the ordinances of the Lord's Sanctuary, they don't seem to count at all. But mind, all such people must face the spiritual realities some day. They must die and pass away—beyond their earthly interests—and I have heard more than one confess with a great solemnity how dark it was then, down the valley of the shadow of death. I can re-produce their plaintive cries. 'If I am graciously allowed to recover from this illness, I shall attend to the means of grace with unfailing regularity.' Oh! the pity of it all, that you should barter away your soul by sheer neglect. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" But there are others who die well. It is peace with them, perfect peace. The faithful parents who amid all the toil and care of bringing up a large family never forsook the House of God, but were faithful unto death. 'In the evil day will He hide me in His tabernacle.' "

In majesty and simplicity, with a passionate desire to accomplish the true aims of preaching Dr. John Hughes occupied a place of great power amongst the "giants of the pulpit."

IX.

LIGHT AND HEAT.

PRINCIPAL T. CHARLES EDWARDS, M.A., D.D. (1837—1900). We are now in the presence of a preacher of the front rank, not only in Wales, but throughout the United Kingdom, and also a Biblical scholar of European reputation. He served the whole nation as the first Principal of the University College, Aberystwyth. The light and heat of his blazing personality influenced the first generation of students so much (many of whom became national leaders in the highest spheres of thought and action) that he has been oftentimes described as "the maker of modern Wales." He was the eldest son of Dr. Lewis Edwards, while his mother was a grand-daughter of the renowned Charles of Bala, and sister of Dr. David Charles, the first Principal of Trevecca College for 20 years. He proved himself eminently worthy of his noble lineage. The best elements of the Prophets' School at Bala, founded by his father, the broad culture of the modern London University and the richest resources of Oxford learning, went to furnish his mind, destined by nature to be of the first order. Although he won many laurels at the Universities,—ancient and modern, and was promptly called to occupy the highest position in the Academic circles of his native land, the great passion of his life was preaching the Gospel. There have been distinguished Welshmen who abandoned preaching, after reaching positions of prestige and power in other circles, but not so Principal Edwards. When some of the College Governors gently hinted that he might be of still greater service as Principal if he curtailed his pulpit activities, he replied with flashing eyes, and a voice quivering with emotion, that he could do nothing to crush his deepest convictions, or agree to anything that must impair the intensest passion of his soul. It would be just as easy to resist the sun in

the full glory of its meridian splendour, when shining on fields and forests, as to prevent this devoted servant of the Lord from enlightening the teeming population of the hills and valleys of South Wales, as well as the rural hamlets of the North, with the enraptured enthusiasm of his mighty preaching.

He always insisted upon a personal experience of the saving Gospel truths as essential to a minister of religion. I heard him deliver a Charge at an Ordination service, and the burden of his message was this: "You must have a personal, living experience of the indwelling Christ. It is of no use preaching the Christ of Heaven, and the Christ of Calvary, unless you feel His power in all the abundance of His grace abiding in your own hearts."

His mind revealed a happy combination of the synthetic—his father's great gift, and the analytic—which was Principal D. Charles Davies's distinguishing feature (also a kinsman on the maternal side). Both these traits of mind are conspicuous in all his writings, notably in his great Commentary on 1 Corinthians, which, according to Dr. Marcus Dods, Dean Farrar and Dr. Benjamin Jowett, Master of Balliol, raised the standard of Biblical exposition in this country. He was more adventurous than his father, who used to represent himself accordingly and say: "Thomas Charles is very daring. If I were to utter one half of the speculations he revels in, I should be called to account by the Association" ("Traethodydd," July, 1901). But he believed with all his heart the great fundamental truths, and it has been observed that the secret of his strength and stability was Paul's conception of the Person of Christ. It was the higher experience of Christ as "all in all" that formed the core and kernel of his theology.

He felt that all systems of theology were inadequate in some things, and his ideal was a Creed more divine than Arminianism, more human than Calvinism, and yet more Christian than both, but combining the great elements of truth about the Person of Christ, which the two systems contained in some measure. His definition of a Christian was: "One saved from himself, and cleansed from all sin by a living unity with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ."

His "baptism of fire" during the Revival of 1859 has been often described. The Rev. David Morgan, Ysbytty Ystwyth, was preaching at a week-night service in Bala, and T. Charles Edwards, then a student, only attended the meeting at his mother's request. He was strongly prejudiced against the Revivalist, and not free from a good deal of intellectual pride. But the homely preacher had a message which reached the young man's heart, changing his whole life, and also his conception of preaching. He soon afterwards expressed himself in outbursts of great joy, confessing to his friends: "If I were offered a thousand pounds for doing this a month ago I should contemptuously refuse, but if I were offered all that now for resisting myself, I could not possibly succeed. I simply do it because I must." He often described that crisis in his life, and once at a great gathering of another Denomination, when addressing the Congregational College, at Brecon in 1891. The enthusiasm was so great that instead of the usual vote of thanks to the speaker the proceedings developed into a great Revival meeting.

He used to say that a vision of the Person of Christ had awakened in his nature depths of thought, depths of feeling, and he also earnestly hoped depths of moral character, that were utterly unknown to him before. His enthusiasm on this subject, the great central idea of his faith, reminded one of the traditions about the fervid experiences of Howell Harris, the great mystic of Trevecca. He became completely lost in adoration when contemplating this great mystery of the "God-man."

The Principal's temperament was naturally fervent, and when in the Lecture Room at College his sentences were red-hot, reaching their destination like bullets which never missed their mark, while some of his colleagues were cold as icicles, and their products more like snowballs than bullets. Likewise in the pulpit, he was stirred to his utmost soul by the message, for there never was a preacher more thoroughly independent of a mechanical Welsh "hwyl." But a genuine power would soon be upon him, as the result of his heart's contact with the living truth and a holy fire would set the whole congregation ablaze

with great spiritual manifestations. He combined the intrepid power of the old Hebrew prophets, with the sanctified enthusiasm of the apostles, proving that the highest culture need not destroy the most burning zeal, nor fix a gulf between the preacher and the common people.

There was a happy bridal of the fervour of the old Methodist Fathers, and the ripest culture of his own day in Principal Edwards which made his position unique. His gestures were dramatic like John Elias, and his descriptive powers sometimes approached Mr. Matthews', but his self-control was not so complete. His personal appeals were as thrilling as Dr. Owen Thomas', and more general throughout the sermon. And very frequently he shone with all the unction of Henry Rees himself.

Principal Edwards attained the highest stature of all the giants of our Connexion, when we remember his natural abilities, broad culture, and passion for preaching. It must be also remembered that he wielded an influence—most potent—far outside our pulpit, and the borders of the homeland. I heard him first of all at an Association in Treacastle, in August, 1885, when he delivered the Charge at the Ordination of Ministers, on "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." In one of his most dramatic passages, he summoned three personages before him to examine and to cross-examine them on "Life," its essence and meaning. The first was Nero, the Emperor of Rome. "What is the meaning of Life?" was the question put with great earnestness. "Life," replied the Emperor, "why—Life is sensuality, Life is pleasure, it is the full play of animal passion, with no checks or restraints whatsoever. It is the wearing of purple and fine linen, in a gilded palace, and faring sumptuously every day. Life! It means that one is 'monarch of all he surveys, his right there is none to dispute,' with the power of grinding all men into dust under the iron heel of universal sovereignty. That is life in my judgment," replied Nero.

"Oh! indeed! And that is the infamous reply of the monster who stained his throne by shedding alike the innocent blood of both the most enlightened heathen philosophers, and also believing Christians, in following his lascivious desires. If

that is Life, how is it that we possess a conscience at all, and are endowed with deep and abiding spiritual instincts, which compel us sometimes in a quiet moment to contemplate God, and the great Hereafter in all its stern realities. Oh! No, we must turn our faces away, and dismiss that monster of iniquity, staggered at the idea that such a fiend, even for a brief moment, should be permitted to degrade the human form."

The next witness was Seneca. The question is put: "What is life?" "Life, well, to live means that one identifies oneself with the good and pure, revelling in the fine universe of lofty ideals and sublime projects, far away from brutal passions and unhallowed thoughts."

"Splendid! Thou hast answered well, thou comely thinker. It is not easy to excel in sweetness and light such a fine conception of life. And yet, shall we try once more?"

"What is Life, Paul?" "Life," replies the Apostle, now in the custody of a Roman soldier. "Life, one has to ascend far above earth's cloudy regions, sweeping past angels and arch-angels, until one reaches Him who is seated on the right hand of God in heaven, but who loves me, far down amid all the degradation of this dungeon. And for me 'to live is Christ.' " "Well done, thou great Apostle of the Gentiles, invested with all the heroism of the Cross. Thou hast gone far beyond the precincts of abstract philosophy, and art absorbed in the living communion of a Divine Person."

"But I must also put the question with all reverence to Him who sitteth on the right hand of God, and is the supreme object of the Apostle's adoration. Oh, Thou holy Jesus, strong immortal Son of God, what is Life? There is one who speaks from the seat of his authority, quite unabashed, that Life is lust and sensuality. Another, I am thankful to say, ascends to the heights of intellectual supremacy, and insists that Life is pure idealism, but the Apostle replies in the chains of captivity that to him Thou, the Christ of God, art Life."

"And, methinks, I can hear the gentle Jesus speak in reply: "Life! For me to live is the world's redemption. It is the Incarnation and the Atonement. It is to be nailed to the accursed tree wearing the crown of thorns, so that sinners poor and

needy, sick and sore, should be cleansed from all sin and iniquity. For Me to live is the salvation of men."

And then the preacher, in quiet tones, proceeded and said: "I know now what it is to live. Paul says that to live for him is devotion to Thee, O Son of God, and Thou sayest, gentle Jesus, that Thy life is the salvation of Paul and all the human race. You understand each other right well, and blessed be God, so do I. For me also 'to live is Christ.'"

"Oh! to grace how great a debtor,
Daily I'm constrained to be."

The Rev. H. Harris, D.D. (B.), describes the Principal at St. David's, discussing the "Assembly of the first-born," before a great congregation. Having preached with great passion and power he paused just before the end, and if the great white throne itself had descended the silence could not have been more intense. He began slowly once more: "How silent it is," said he. "We are at the General Assembly and Church of the first-born, but there is no noise, not a sound, not a murmur. There is an innumerable company of angels here. God the Judge of all is here. The spirits of just men made perfect are here, and Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant. And yet not a word is spoken. Why all this silence. Oh, it is that everybody should hear the Message of the Blood that speaketh better things than that of Abel." The writer adds that these dramatic touches were simply perfect, and the effects far beyond anything of the kind he had ever experienced.

Dr. T. Charles Edwards must always occupy a position of supremacy, not only amongst the giants of our own Connexion, but having also availed himself of the opportunities of a wider ministry amongst the English-speaking population, will be regarded by the ages of posterity as one of the world's greatest preachers in the 19th century.

X.

LAST ONES GONE BEFORE.

THE REV. J. MORGAN JONES, LL.D. (1839—1921). Strength and stability were the main characteristics of this much esteemed minister. He occupied a prominent position as an Educationist, Writer and Preacher for many years. In South Wales he stood supreme as ecclesiastical statesman for 40 years. Principal Prys, D.D., who is not usually given to much extravagance, stated at his funeral in Cardiff that he had been convinced now for many years past that Dr. J. Morgan Jones was one of the four or five greatest leaders of our Connexion from its first inception, and that since Ebenezer Morris and John Elias he stood unrivalled in both clearness of vision and unflinching courage to put his ideals into practice. He was twice promoted to the Chair of the General Assembly, an honour conferred only on two of his predecessors—Dr. Lewis Edwards and Dr. Owen Thomas. His skill as an administrator was known and admired from the early days when he was sent by the Glamorgan Monthly Meeting to restore peace in a church and district notorious for their quarrelling propensities, up to the time when in old age, yet full of vigour, he was called by the Connexion to be the General Superintendent of the Forward Movement. He discharged the duties of that great position with marked ability and wisdom, consolidating the aggressive work of his ardent predecessor, Dr. John Pugh, the founder of the Movement.

But he was not only a man of action, but also a prolific author, and eminently practical in all his writings. As Commentator and Editor his fame was in all the churches. His bulky volumes on the "Methodist Fathers" will be a permanent monument of his capacity as a historian. He drank deeply of the inspiration of the Fathers, and saw clearly the heroism

of their lives and labours. He was also endowed with the rare power of telling the story in strong and trenchant language to the rising generation.

As a preacher he had for many years occupied the most prominent positions in both the North and South Wales Associations, although he had never coveted popularity, nor paid the least attention to the arts which sometimes charm and capture the crowds. He depended entirely upon the strength of his massive thoughts, and the evangelical tone of his valued ministry. The words of the old Hebrew prophet could never be truthfully applied to him: "And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument." There was a controversy once about the miracle of turning the water into wine at Cana of Galilee. There were some who maintained that the miracle was not in the water at all as it stood in the vessels, but that it occurred when the water was being poured out of the spout. "Exactly," retorted a witty minister who was present, "and how like some of us who are preaching to-day, the wine, I am afraid, would not be up to much with some of us, were it not for the spout." But not so with Dr. J. Morgan Jones. The miracle was not in the spout at all. He could speak fluently enough, and occasionally reached heights of genuine eloquence, but it was mainly through the power of his thoughts. There was also much tenderness in his nature allied to strength, but the harshness of the voice scarcely permitted him to give it adequate expression. When denouncing the sins of to-day, he lifted up his voice in trumpet tones, but it was not the silver trumpet of the Fathers, although very powerful and effective.

He well knew that a new period had dawned on the pulpit in Wales, and that new problems had to be faced and solved. It was interesting to observe his geniality to those young preachers who affected the new style, as long as he was persuaded they were earnest and true in their emphasis on the fundamentals of the Gospel, otherwise he could be very stern and uncompromising.

Dr. J. Morgan Jones occupies a high position amongst the giants of our Connexion because of his strength of mind and

character, dedicated to the Lord, all through his long life of loyal and whole-hearted service.

The Rev. E. Rees ("Dyfed") was fully justified in applying to him the words of Job when in a reminiscent mood: "The young men saw me and hid themselves, and the aged arose and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me." That picture will always stand out as a happy and correct representation of Dr. J. Morgan Jones at the height of his power in the Courts of the Connexion, from the East Glamorgan Monthly Meeting to the General Assembly, when at last he was called home, full of years and of honours to the General Assembly of the first-born in heaven.

THE REV. JOHN WILLIAMS, D.D., BRYNSIENCYN (1854—1921). This distinguished minister will be the last to come under our observation in this series of sketches, and it is freely admitted that he is equal in stature to almost any of the giants which have gone before. He has passed away so recently, and the tributes of appreciation have been so general by the leaders of all Denominations that it is needless to enlarge much for the purposes of this booklet.

Physically and intellectually he stood out from the majority of his contemporaries as a giant in all respects. His towering form and stately brow, the strong and yet not unkindly expression of his countenance with his graceful movements, made him a living embodiment of dignity and power, reminding one of the traditions still floating about the Royal Welsh Chieftains of ancient times, although he was neither ashamed nor afraid to own his plebeian origin, and never troubled the College of Heralds about tracing his ancestry to any of the Welsh Princes. He could have declared with another illustrious personage: "I am my own ancestor." Being a giant in body and mind he combined the finest elements of power attached to the Welsh pulpit at its best. He frequently lectured on John Elias, and it was patent that he greatly admired that prince of orators,

with all the zeal of a devoted hero worshipper. But they differed very considerably in some things. Dr. John Williams was endowed with a finer physique, and a lovelier face, although perhaps not capable of a greater variety of expression. But the solemnity and intensity of the earlier preacher also possessed the soul of the seer of Brynsiencyn when in the full passion of his preaching.

It was not his method to strike fire very soon like Roberts Clynnog. It is a matter of common knowledge that it took Dr. John Williams some time to boil an audience, and some of his hearers would appear indifferent until the inimitable oratory came upon them with its resistless and overwhelming power. The quiet dignity of his introduction, and the perfect self-control of the preacher, added to the ultimate effect of the majestic delivery, so that he almost invariably captured and conquered the most listless and wayward of his congregations long before the close of his elaborate sermons. And when he soared in the lofty heights of his unapproachable climax it is not often that such sweeping effects have been experienced within living memory. Not that he ever claimed to be an independent thinker of the highest order, enunciating new principles in either philosophy or divinity. He worked mainly on the old lines of Mona's long list of honoured preachers. But his range of reading was extensive, and his Commentary on "Thessalonians" and Davies Lecture on "Atonement" prove that he was quite abreast of the times, although it must be admitted that in neither does he advance any original views of his own as a speculative thinker. It was his mission in life to crystalize what was best in the theology of this and all other previous ages, by expressing it in the stateliest and choicest Welsh diction ever heard from the pulpit of his native land.

It has been said that Dr. Hughes (whose biography he wrote) was the model preacher of his youth, but he excelled all the heroes of his early days, although their influence was slightly traceable in his style to the end. It was strong enough to preclude him from the credit of inaugurating a new period. He was rather "the last of the barons" than the bold initiator

of a new style. It may be presumption on my part to proceed very far in this vein, so let Professor R. Morris, M.A., B.D., make his pronouncement as follows:—"If it be too much to say that Dr. John Williams was the greatest preacher of our Connexion from its early beginning, it may not be too much to state that in some one thing he excelled every one of his predecessors. If he lacked the unction of Henry Rees he excelled him in the purely human naturalness of his ministry. If not such an acute thinker as D. Charles Davies, he was a much greater orator. If his appeals to the heart and conscience were not so pointed as those of Dr. Owen Thomas, the range of his ministry was wider, and his literary diction finer and more finished. If he never came to such a close contact with the people as Joseph Thomas, Carno, he did something greater still, by lifting the people to the high level of his own perorations, until they were completely subdued. And if he lacked the poetic beauty (and the Professor might have added "the genuine humour") of Dr. J. Hughes, his delivery was more energetic and impressive" ("Y Geninen," March, 1922).

He never attempted any witticism in the pulpit, and judging from his face he was rather intolerant of this gift in others. He seemed to think it impossible to inscribe "holiness to the Lord" on the bridles of those horses which cantered away under the control of some of his nimble-minded brethren on the great field-day of an Association.

He was very happy in his quotations from "Pantycelyn" and Goronwy Owen, which he freely used to give wings to his own stately prose, but I often wondered how it was that Islwyn's still sublimer thoughts were never on his lips. Is it possible that with all his gifts he lacked the power to appreciate the mysticism of the great bard of Gwent?

Dr. Williams's Welsh vocabulary was simply perfect, and what a treat it was to hear him pronounce the grand, sonorous notes of our mother tongue, the sacred speech of the old Welsh Revivals, the native dialect of poetry and romance. He was not so sensitive to the music of Welsh idioms as Alafon or Emrys ap Iwan. But he was unrivalled in his vocabulary and enunciation.

The Rev. T. Charles Williams observed at the time of Dr. John Williams's lamented death, that he was one of the world's greatest preachers monopolized entirely by his own little country. Principal T. Charles Edwards went oftentimes over the borders to England and Scotland, and was the greatest bi-lingual preacher of the pulpit of his day. Dr. John Williams confined himself to his own nation, but in that capacity, and within those limits, he will always be known as "one of the immortals."

XI.

CONCLUSION.

THIS imperfect sketch of the "giants" of our pulpit is now completed, and there is no space to describe our prospects for the future. It is certain that we are on the crossroads, and that a new period has dawned upon us, for better or worse. The last of the giants described only interpreted the ideals of his own age, expressing its aspirations in the old way. There was no great attempt to start out upon a new course in a speculative spirit. It is true that Principal T. Charles Edwards pointed in a new direction, and enunciated some few doctrines that were far in advance of his own day in Wales. We have an increasing number of leaders that are now alive to the difficulties of the situation, and prepared to face them with all boldness, seeking no smiles and fearing no frowns. The following significant words were spoken at a meeting of Ministers recently in a North Wales Association, and subsequently published in the "Traethodydd" (April, 1922):—"The Biblical criticism of the past few years has made preaching a much more difficult work. It has robbed us of many a promising text, it has shattered the frame of many an ambitious sermon, and has strangled many a sonorous and sweeping peroration in its delivery. Still, it must be admitted, that every honest and fair criticism is the handmaid of truth. And whatever leads men to truth, is it not always, whatever may be its name,—for Christ and not against Him? Criticism has restored the original freedom of an enlightened mind, and an honest spirit in its dealings with the Bible. But it is true liberty and not unbridled license. Criticism has been the means of revealing more clearly than ever the true standard of life and truth, which is Christ Jesus our Lord. We now see in all the variety of persons and incidents in the Old Testament, the unity of God's saving purpose, that purpose which finds its full expression in

the 'Word which was made flesh.' If we have beheld His glory and have received of His fulness, our message as preachers of the Gospel is a certain possession. It is a message of reconciliation with God through the Cross, of a new creation in Christ producing good works. That is the message, and that must be the subject matter of our preaching. All honest and fair criticism (and we would recognize no other) is therefore the means of enabling us to preach the Gospel in all its breadth, freedom and life."

That we feel to be simply splendid in its sanity and clearness, sounding the key-note of the preaching of this new period, which is now upon us. And when we fearlessly follow the dispensations of the Spirit, guiding us into all Truth, we find that if outward forms are changing the main thing is to save the substance, without of course any feeling of disparagement for the great heritage received from the past.

If we are compelled to-day to view the doctrines of religion from other standpoints than those favoured by many of the Fathers shall we always remember that the fundamentals of the Gospel which they preached so effectually must always remain imperishable to the end, until the whole world is won for Christ, and filled with the beauty of holiness.

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